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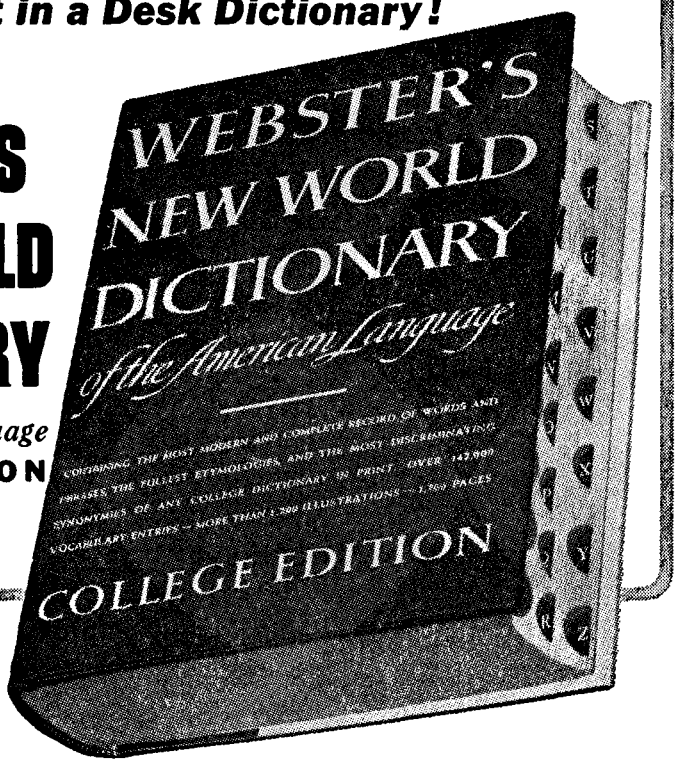

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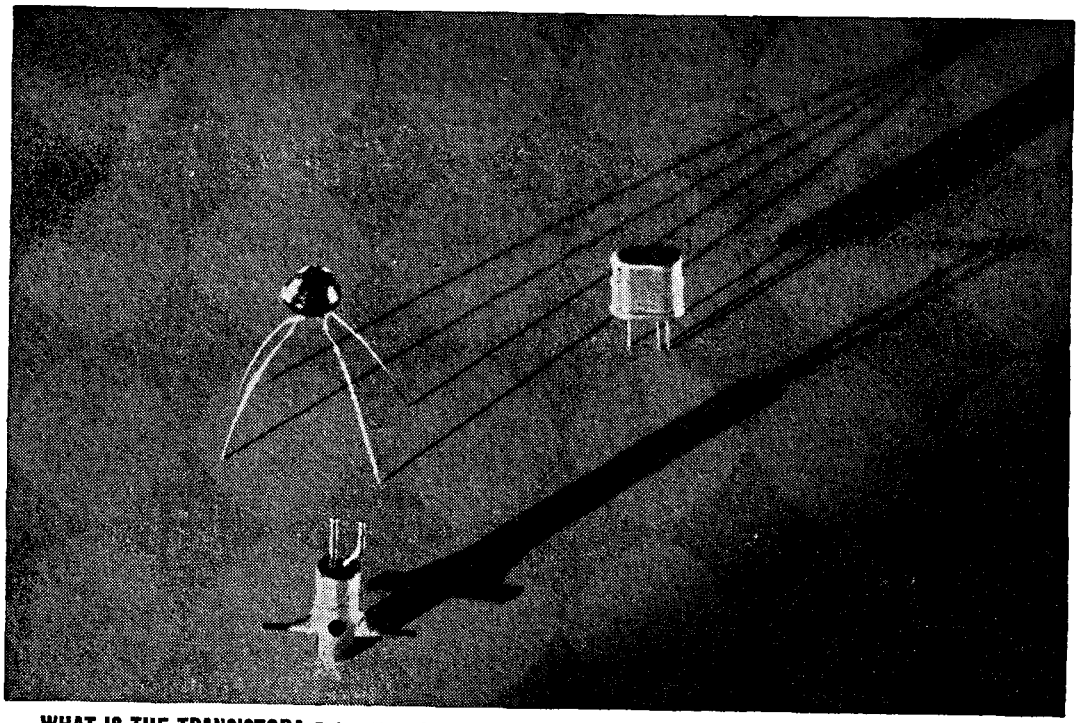

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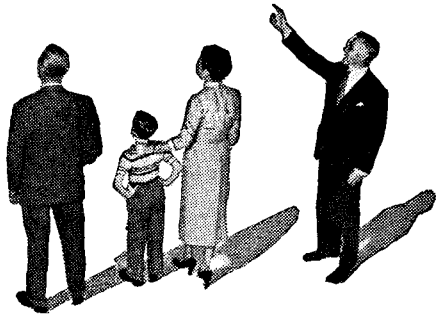

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Volume 22 *SUMMER, 1953* Number 3

CONTENTS

An Atlantic Curtain?	*William G. Carleton*	265
Three American Philosophers	*George Santayana*	281
Emerson's Tragic Sense	*Stephen E. Whicher*	285
Party Line History	*Anatole G. Mazour*	293
Sojourn, *A Poem*	*Frances Colvin*	304
Small Experiment in Civilization	*Brooks Atkinson*	305
Poems:	*Walter H. Eaton*	312
On the Recent Dead		
Concert Piece		
Sweeney, Rising to the Occasion		
The Range of the Normal Heart Rate	*Paul D. White*	315
The Life and Death of Words	*Dwight L. Bolinger*	323
Old Song, *A Poem*	*Lincoln Fitzell*	336
The Making of a "Communist"	*Bradford Smith*	337
Some New Forty-Niner Letters	*Mary Ormsbee Whitton*	346
UNDER WHATEVER SKY	*Irwin Edman*	361
THE REVOLVING BOOKSTAND		
Reviews by *James Holly Hanford, Evelyn Eaton, Stewart Holbrook* and *Asher Lans*		364
Brief comments on nineteen outstanding books of the previous quarter		378
THE READER REPLIES		382

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 22 *Summer, 1953* NUMBER 3

An Atlantic Curtain?

WILLIAM G. CARLETON

INFLUENTIAL EUROPEANS have two misgivings with respect to American leadership in world affairs. They fear that Americans are hysterical and war-minded and in process of imposing thought controls on their fellow Americans; and they feel that Americans still do not understand European conditions and attitudes. As a matter of fact, these sentiments are linked together and grow out of the same situation.

Several times recently Bertrand Russell has stated publicly that liberty is drying up in the United States, that the only places where real freedom any longer exists are in western Europe, particularly in Britain and Scandinavia. These statements shock Americans, but they are regarded as true by many leading Europeans. Europeans often say, "If the Americans had to deal with the Red Dean of Canterbury, they long ago would have defrocked him and sent him to jail. The English merely listen in irritated and tolerant amusement." Not long ago an official organ of the Anglican Church ended a ringing editorial on the need to maintain freedom with this sentence: "Let us be thankful that in Britain we have nothing so un-British as a committee on un-British activities."

Recently an exchange graduate student from Germany called my attention to an issue of an American magazine of wide circulation which carried an article entitled "Confessions of an American

✪ WILLIAM G. CARLETON is professor of political science at the University of Florida and chairman of the social sciences in the University College. Many of the observations contained in this article are the results of Mr. Carleton's personal experiences in Europe.

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Liberal." Referring to this article, the German student asked, "Is it not enough that you Americans demand recantation from Communists and even Socialists? Do you now demand it of all liberals?" This same German student later asked, "What do you Americans mean by the word 'egghead'? Is that some kind of intellectual? Are you Americans ridiculing all creative and talented people, all people with ideas? Has it become a sin in America to have an idea?"

Europeans point to the "witch hunts" staged by Congressional committees; the proliferation of "totalitarian" demagogues like McCarthy and Jenner; the tighter security guarantees surrounding and inhibiting American scientists; the imprisoning of American Communist leaders, not for overtly hostile acts but for constructively hostile ones. (The French say that they, unlike the Americans, caught their Communist leaders actually directing riots but that they released them.) Europeans also have taken note of the suppression of that sensitive movie *The Miracle*; the threat of the Department of Justice to bar Charlie Chaplin's re-entry into the United States; the refusal of the State Department to permit Alberto Moravia to visit this country; the barring of playwright George Kaufman from television for a time because of an "irreligious" remark; the *arrest* of a heckler who put a question to Senator McCarthy while the latter was speaking to an electioneering banquet last October; the debate at a national meeting of secondary teachers of the social sciences at Dallas last autumn in which the very word "social" in social sciences had to be defended from subversive connotations; the increasing suspicion and condemnation of schools, teachers and textbooks in the United States.

Many Europeans place together bits of evidence like these and conclude that a veritable reign of terror is at work in American schools and colleges, that a grand inquisition is in progress against all Americans who deviate from narrowly accepted thought.

There is some truth in the European observations about America's growing thought control, but the thought control that exists in America is taking a somewhat different turn from that conceived by Europeans. There is no overt reign of terror among our intellectuals. Relatively few teachers, professors, editors and writers have actually been dismissed from their positions, although Hollywood, radio and television artists have increasing difficulty getting

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"cleared." Individual intellectuals may still be found who deviate from current stereotyped thinking. These individuals usually keep their jobs. However—and this is the nub of the matter—nonconforming individuals have less and less influence. Fewer and fewer avenues of expression are open to them. Fewer and fewer people take them seriously.

The greatest danger to freedom in America does not consist in espionage and personal persecution; the greatest danger is that a growing consensus, an omnivorous stereotyping of thought, is drying up the sources of diversity and deviation and intellectually isolating all those who do not conform. A non-governmental, self-imposed totalitarianism in ideas seems to be creeping over American life. The danger is not terrorization; the danger is that there will be few individuals to terrorize. The danger is deadly intellectual inbreeding, and consequent intellectual isolation from the thought of the rest of the world.

Western Europe, although physically closer to the Communist menace, has escaped so complete a uniformity of thought. Europeans have lived with the Communist threat since 1917. In some countries, like Italy and France, non-Communists in their everyday activities are compelled to associate with many actual Communists —in stores, in restaurants, in theaters, at dances, and at social affairs generally. Communists are not men from Mars. They are not thought of wholly as devils, and the Communist movement is not conceived of as wholly irrational and foolish. Most Europeans realize that communism springs in large measure from conditions and that conditions can best combat it.

Again, the political parties of European countries are more numerous, more varied, and the differences among them more sharply drawn. Western European countries have capitalist parties, but they also have socialist and social-democratic parties. These latter parties do not view events from capitalist points of view. Even in Britain, where in the main a two-party system exists, the parties are wider apart ideologically than American parties. These more widely diverse parties of Europe act as mass agencies to keep their national publics conscious of multiple possibilities, alternatives and options in foreign and domestic policy.

Periodicals in Europe reflect this wide range of opinion. A single

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issue of a periodical on the Continent or in Britain may contain an article by a Louis Aragon, a Saragat, a Silone, a Croce, a Maritain, a Malraux, a Russell, a Morrison, a Crossman, a Bevan, a Harold Macmillan, and a T. S. Eliot—or, more commonly, a galaxy of lesser names expressing a similarly diverse range of views and feelings. And while there are relatively few individual periodicals with such catholicity of scope, every point of view represented by the names just listed has open to it important periodicals.

Moreover, the better European periodicals carry a number of "heavy" articles which contain a large amount of factual information combined with mature and reflective interpretation. When a magazine like *Twentieth Century* or the *Economist* does a piece on Thailand or Indonesia or Iraq or Turkey or Sweden or Argentina, the article is not written with the question uppermost: Are these people for us or against us? Are they for the "free world" or for the "slave world"? Rather, the article is likely to be written from the point of view of the country under discussion and to deal in rather full and almost always realistic fashion with the social classes and political groups in conflict in that country.

American society does not possess the forces and agencies which make it easy to maintain a wide range of divergent thought in the face of grave international crisis. There are only two vital political parties in America. No third party offering a significant new approach any longer exists, and the choice between the two major parties is relatively narrow. Both these parties, because of their incongruous and widely inclusive natures, gravitate toward the center. Political differences are blurred and obscured. The bipartisan foreign policy has narrowed further the differences between the parties and has resulted in putting a far larger emphasis in American foreign policy on armaments than on undermining communism by positive programs of popular mass appeal and basic social reform in Europe and Asia. This preponderant emphasis on military solutions has strengthened the conservatives of both parties.

America's "underprivileged" groups—the wage earners, the sharecroppers, and the Negroes—are so "privileged" by European and Asiatic standards that their point of view is likely to be as conformist and nationalist as that of other American groups. Our

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wage earner and Negro groups share so much of America's national prosperity that they scarcely function as links to socialist and social-democratic parties abroad or as vehicles for popularizing in America the attitudes of socialist and social-democratic parties in Europe. The article contributed by Walter Reuther to the "Third World War" issue of *Collier's* shows how widely the thought of a representative "radical" labor leader of America differs from the thought of European labor.

American periodicals reflect American political uniformity. An American liberal periodical, the *New Republic,* attacks Britain's *New Statesman and Nation,* a leading left-wing socialist periodical, as disloyal to the free world. The *New Leader,* an American periodical of socialist origin, is much closer in point of view to the *Freeman,* that four-square exponent of American free enterprise, than it is to the socialist periodicals of Europe, be they left-wing, right-wing or moderate. Indeed, the *New Leader* and the *Freeman* have many contributors in common. The *Nation,* which consistently reports to Americans the point of view of socialist and social-democratic parties in Europe, is now almost constantly under attack by American liberals.

When an American periodical of large circulation carries a story on a European, an Asiatic, an African or a South American country, that story almost invariably approaches the material from the *American* point of view. Is that country on *our* side? Has it ranged itself squarely for the free world, that is, on the side of American foreign policy? If it has, the article is likely to be accompanied by photographs of peasants in neat native garb; of that country's new army with its shiny, up-to-date equipment furnished by American money; of modern buildings in that country's capital city, buildings likewise made possible by American money. Rarely, almost never, does the story deal in realistic fashion with the actual group and party conflicts taking place in that country.

The growing uniformity of American thought is making it increasingly difficult for Americans to learn and understand the views of their allies in western Europe. A small and shrinking segment of European opinion shares America's middle-class attitudes and sympathizes with American free enterprise ideas. But the overwhelming mass of people in Europe are more socialist in

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their thinking—even those who do not belong to socialist or social-democratic parties, even those who belong to the Catholic parties of the center. The repeated disasters which have befallen Europeans since 1914 have largely destroyed the middle classes and middle-class attitudes.

A prominent Frankfurt editor, who believes strongly that communism must be contained and that America and western Europe must work together to contain it, recently visited America. He was amazed at the appalling gulf between shellshocked Europe and the cheerful hedonism of Americans "with their great overriding urge to make the world, or at least America, safe for middle-class comfort and leisureliness." He found Americans frighteningly remote from the poverty-stricken and sullen atmosphere of the Old World.

Another European editor, recently in America, likewise a friend of American foreign policy, expressed himself as feeling that there was as much difference between America and western Europe as between western Europe and eastern Europe. "Are the Americans ringing down an iron curtain in the Atlantic, cutting themselves off from understanding their allies in western Europe?" he asked. The thought barriers separating Europeans and Americans hardly constitute an *iron* curtain or even a curtain—perhaps a screen better describes them—but what is needed are bridges of communication and understanding, not barriers.

Most articles about European opinion of things American which appear in American periodicals are misleading; they are expressly written with a view to not shocking or wounding Americans. For instance, it is doubtful if even the articles of D. W. Brogan and Barbara Ward, which not infrequently appear in the Sunday *New York Times Magazine*, would be publishable in England as a representative attitude of the British toward American policies. Sometimes Bertrand Russell, peppery old rascal that he is, publishes articles in America about British and European opinion of things American that are candid enough to be published in Europe too. Some of the articles of Alexander Werth which appear in the *Nation* also appear in European periodicals. But Russell and Werth are exceptions.

Few Europeans, except doctrinaire Marxists, think of America as a fascist country. The analogy most often made by informed

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Europeans is that which compares modern Americans to ancient Romans. Americans are thought of as doers and organizers from a wealthy land, possessing little maturity or sensitivity in things not immediately practical. (Are Americans really interested in anything except applied technology and their own precious standard of living? Europeans often ask.) This analogy to the Romans is flattering to Europeans, for they think of themselves as Hellenes who must teach Americans greater maturity and better acquaint them with the rich diversity of the Western heritage.

But many Europeans have reservations about the Americans becoming the successful Romans of the modern age. Will the Americans come to know enough about the vast non-Soviet world in time to organize it effectively? Can they develop sufficient political maturity in time to lead so large a part of the world? Will they be tolerant of the wide and rich diversities existing in this far-flung world, sufficiently imaginative and sympathetic in their approach to its many and various cultures and points of view? As Americans more and more insulate themselves from European points of view, increasingly and defensively identifying the good life and the salvation of Western civilization with economic free enterprise narrowly conceived, Europeans wonder.

Not long ago I had a heart-to-heart talk with a well-known professor in an Italian university. He made a comment about Americans something like the following: "Americans were once an earthy people suffering the vicissitudes of the rest of mankind—in the wilderness and along the frontier, even more than their share—and having a sense of individual and of collective tragedy. From earliest colonial times they were also a highly diverse people, containing within themselves many different nationalities, religions and sub-cultures. All of this made for an affirmation of qualitative human and social values that linked Americans with the deepest emotions of Western civilization and of mankind. But at home Americans have not experienced profound emotional tragedy of a collective sort since the Civil War (although since that time most of the rest of mankind has undergone collective sufferings of the most poignant kind); and through the widespread use of machines Americans have removed individual tragedy a few degrees, disguised it, and given it a new dimension. Americans have mecha-

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nized their emotions and standardized their ideas so that these have become mere popular stereotypes, mere quantitative reflections of mass wishful thinking, mass illusions and mass half-truths. This has resulted in superficiality, in emotional thinness and in a kind of narcissistic self-adulation. When Americans project their home-made stereotypes into world affairs, in which historically they have had little experience, the result is even more serious distortion. Moreover, America's national leaders have distressingly little humanistic and historical background. They seem to be mostly businessmen, business lawyers, advertising men, military men, and narrow specialists and technicians."

When Europeans ask that Americans become less stereotyped in their international thinking, more aware of cultural diversities in the world, and more alive to the alternatives in the world situation today, what do they mean? Let us consider these in more concrete fashion.

First, Europeans feel that the Americans do not understand or will not admit the forces making for greater collectivism in Europe and Asia. And they are frightened when Americans fail or refuse to make the very important distinction between Communists and Socialists. The mass of western Europeans are socialists of a sort, whether they actually belong to a Socialist party or not. They say that if Americans cannot learn to live gracefully with socialist allies, the Grand Alliance ultimately will founder. To Europeans, American public men who put Socialists and Communists in the same boat and who publicly denounce socialism are potentially as isolationist as those super-nationalistic Americans who today are denouncing the United Nations and UNESCO.

Second, many Europeans believe that the Americans do not understand the nature of the revolutions now taking place among the "backward" peoples. Almost all informed Europeans see these revolutions as partially combinations of native nationalism (or "resurgent culturalism," to use the term of F. S. C. Northrop) and indigenous collectivism, and not, even in China, as mere outthrusts of Soviet communism. Collectivism often arises from the urge of "backward" peoples to move rapidly from feudalism to industrialism, to acquire modern and expensive technology in a hurry and thus drastically raise their living standards. Since these

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backward peoples have no extensive native middle classes and capitalist classes, they must provide the capital for widespread and rapid industrial development either by borrowing from foreign capitalists (and seeing much of the benefit siphoned off by American and European capitalists) or by creating capital through collective government action. The backward peoples are choosing the latter course as apparently more advantageous to themselves. Therefore all contemporary nativist revolutions of national liberation also contain large elements of collectivism. Sometimes that collectivism is extreme, as in Communist China; sometimes it is milder and seeks to go slower and to develop both bread and freedom simultaneously, as in the social democracy of Nehru's followers in India. But the native collectivism is always there, differing in degree from country to country. An English journalist once said to me, "In the days of the French Revolution and in the days of the revolutions of 1848, when revolutions were moving in the direction of American experience, Americans had a poorer press but a better understanding of the world situation than they have today."

Third, informed Europeans are convinced that if Americans really understood the reasons for and the depth of the collectivist movements among backward peoples, they would take their Point Four program much more seriously, even to the extent of elevating it to an equal place with their armament program. Mere armaments, Europeans feel, will never win the support of the masses of backward people, will never win the ideological conflict. Only a program which drastically raises living standards will do that. Indeed, a program which puts its overwhelming emphasis on armaments is likely to leave too little capital for an effective Point Four program, and to depress seriously the living standards of America's European allies. Even should the Western world win a war against the Soviet Union, it still would be confronted with what to do about the native nationalist and indigenous collectivist revolutions of the colonial peoples. Americans, then, may be thinking too much in terms of their direct relations with the Soviet Union and not enough in terms of a flank attack on the Communists, not enough in terms of keeping their allies and winning the undecided peoples. Arnold Toynbee says that the balance of power is to be won or lost

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in the areas still uncommitted. America's recent rejection of the United Nations Covenant on Human Rights certainly will not help us in the battle for uncommitted minds.

Fourth, Europeans think that the Americans are failing to see sufficiently the strong nationalist element even in the Communist revolutions. The Communist world revolution has turned out in fact to be a series of Communist national revolutions, taking place in different backward countries at different times, and for the most part building industrial revolutions along national patterns in those countries. The form of Communist organization and the aims of the Communist movement in China are not identical with those of Russia. Moreover, the Chinese do not want the Russians in Manchuria or at Port Arthur or Dairen any more than they want other foreigners there. The Chinese revolution was largely a native, indigenous revolution. (However, it was no mere liberal agrarian revolution!) Help from Russia was late and small. Indeed, at this advanced date, Russia could not put a stop to revolutionary movements and activities in Asia, even Communist ones, assuming Soviet leaders were of a mind to do so. In Europe, even conservative leaders and journals do not believe that China is an abject satellite of Russia. Almost all European leaders, left, right and center, believe that national differences between China and Russia and between some other Communist countries and Russia will take place in time. (Tito's Yugoslavia is an early and extreme expression of what is likely to come, they believe.) They feel that the Western allies should encourage and exploit national differences and seek to substitute a multiple balance of power for the dangerous polarization of power now existing.

Yet in America it is the rankest heresy to suggest that China is not completely dominated by Russia, that every Communist advance anywhere in the world (except in Yugoslavia) is not a direct advance of Soviet imperialism, is not necessarily another step in the dangerous upsetting of the world balance of power. During the height of the Presidential campaign of 1952, Walter Millis asserted in the *New York Herald Tribune* that for either Presidential candidate to hint that Titoism offered some hope of a way out of the international impasse, of a possible way to a multiple and less dangerous balance of power, would be to court

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political disaster. Unfortunately, Millis was emphatically correct. There is simply no place in the present American stereotype for such an eventuality.

The day after the popular victory of the Ibáñez presidential candidacy in Chile, the *New York Times* carried an editorial pointing out the extreme Chilean nationalism in the Ibáñez position and deploring the sweep of two destructive forces in the world: communism and nationalism. The editorial spoke of the nationalist revolutions in Asia, Africa and South America, mentioning among these the Chinese revolution. Yet apparently it never occurred to the writer of this editorial that the nationalism in the Chinese Communist revolution and in other nationalist revolutions might be used constructively to make Communist revolutions less destructive to the interests of America and the Western world. This most certainly would have occurred to editorial writers of that conservative old Rock of Gibraltar, the *London Times*. This difference in approach of the *New York Times* and the *London Times* well illustrates the difference in approach of conservative Americans and conservative Englishmen.

If Americans were more experienced in international affairs, greater consideration would be given to the possibility that historical forces ultimately might work us out of the present stalemate. (This has often happened in the past, more often than is realized, for people remember the crises solved by war much more vividly than the crises solved by underlying historical processes. In the half-century after Waterloo, for instance, Russia, Austria and Prussia were in ideological alliance against democratic countries and posed a serious menace; but this alliance ultimately was split asunder by internal conflicts of national interest.) Americans, however, know too little of long-term historical processes and the long-run working of the balance of power; they are too much impressed with the Hitlerian expansion, their one clear-cut experience with the balance of power, which they read into the present crisis; they are too impatient of temporary frustration; they are too confident of their own wealth and strength; and they are too conscious of their own brief history of uninterrupted success and victory, the success and victory of virtue over evil, to be much impressed by underlying historical forces which ultimately and peacefully may restore a

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multiple balance of power. (At least this is the current European appraisal and fear of the American attitude.)

True, there are still imperialists in Europe who would cling to the old colonialism. There are Dutchmen who lay their country's present burdens to the Dutch withdrawal from Indonesia. There are Englishmen who would hold on to investments in Iran and Egypt, Frenchmen who would hold on to Tunisia. But these are dwindling attitudes; they are much stronger in financial and governing circles than among the European peoples. Moreover, it is not an easy thing to liquidate colonial investments of decades and even of centuries, no matter how clearly the contemporary forces of Asian and African nationalism are perceived. Still, it is remarkable with what grace the British have abandoned their vast empires in India and Burma and make concessions to colonial nationalism elsewhere. Even in Iran and Egypt there is a steady yielding. And it is notable that even among members of the British Conservative party there is strong support for the Colombo Program, Britain's Point Four program in Asia, and for admitting Communist China, which has been officially recognized by Britain, into the United Nations as a means of encouraging Chinese independence in foreign affairs. French opinion is far more anti-imperialist than appears from French government policy, for it must be borne in mind that the basic split between French Communists and Socialists, who see eye to eye on questions of imperialism, makes government policy far more conservative on these matters than French opinion, and the weight of the investing interests inside the so-called Radical Socialist party and inside the Popular Republican movement is usually stronger in molding government policy than in carrying conviction in colonial matters to the rank and file of party members.

Fifth, Europeans distrust the American tendency to approach foreign policy in moralistic and legalistic fashion. They fear that Americans do not appraise in a realistic way the long-term ideological and balance-of-power considerations, that little by little the Americans are moving from policies of containment and security to a policy of eradicating communism everywhere in the world simply because in the American view communism is a moral evil. Europeans believe that if international politics is conceived as a conflict of moralities, then there never can be any basis for compro-

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mise or peaceful living together. International relations then become a conflict of irrationalities, a conflict of intransigencies, a conflict of fanaticisms. Why is it, asks the European, that the conflicts of the historical past almost invariably seem to be conflicts of half-good men (on both sides) and of half-good causes (on both sides), but that to Americans, more than to western Europeans, conflicts in the present seem always to appear as conflicts between white and black, good and evil? Again, Europeans are puzzled by the American habit of using lofty moral terms in foreign affairs while at the same time using those same foreign affairs as vehicles for getting party votes from national minorities in the United States in electioneering campaigns. The fact that the highest moral appeals (the moral appeal of a free Israel, the moral appeal of liberating Poles and Czechs from Soviet tyranny, for example) always accompany these campaigns for minority votes intensifies the danger in European eyes. For it is believed that both the moralistic appeal and the parochial appeal are dangerous, and when combined become doubly so.

Sixth, Europeans point out that Americans still continue along the path of economic isolation. Americans regard inflation and deflation in the United States as exclusively domestic matters. Although the United States is the leading creditor nation, Americans refuse to buy European goods and refuse even to discuss a genuine reduction of their tariffs and the economic integration of the North Atlantic community. Again, American consumption of automobiles, radios, television, electrical equipment, and numerous other mechanical gadgets takes a tremendous toll of the world's resources, but Americans decline to face the economic consequences for the world's future. In short, Europeans view the American disinclination to think seriously of economic planning on a world scale as a cardinal American "irresponsibility."

Finally, Europeans are uneasy about the increasingly nationalistic spirit in the United States. As American thought grows more uniform, it grows more nationalistic; and as it grows more nationalistic, it grows more uniform. Europeans see the United Nations and UNESCO under increasing attack in the United States. They witness the American debate over priority to Asia or Europe; they read statements indicating that more and more prominent Ameri-

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cans feel the United States is so strong that it could maintain a unilateral position in world affairs, that it could go it alone in isolation or in a kind of imperialism which browbeats its allies. The Korean war has intensified American nationalism, and the problems growing out of that war are increasingly divisive for the West, which may be the main reason the Communists refuse an armistice and keep the war going. The Republican victory of last November was widely interpreted in Europe as a victory for conservative and perhaps even unilateral American nationalism. The first moves of the Eisenhower administration in foreign affairs raised fears in Europe that American policies in eastern Europe and in Asia would take European opinion into consideration even less than postwar American policy has done in the past and might even be formulated in opposition to and in defiance of America's allies. Europeans ask: "Of what value is a dragooned European unity, of a Europe dragged along into policies against its better judgment, or of a unity that restores German power to the extent that it produces fear and anxiety in the rest of Europe? And of what good is a European army if it is not backed by an affirmative popular morale? European unity will come; but to be worth anything, it must come through a genuine meeting of minds."

Why has not the American press done a better job of informing Americans of opinion in western Europe? (For instance, Americans had to wait until General MacArthur was actually dismissed to discover the almost universal and profound distrust of MacArthur by all segments of European opinion.) In part, because Americans are too self-conscious about the world crisis and have an exaggerated notion of national security requirements, a notion which may go so far as to defeat some of its own ends; more important, because of the narrow stereotyping of public opinion in America, discussed earlier. The American press faithfully reflects the uniformity of American opinion, the lack of diversity in American classes, groups and political parties.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the most remarkable quality of British world leadership consisted not in Britain's extensive subsidies to her allies, not in her willingness to buy the goods of her debtor allies—important as these were—but rather in her sense of vicariousness, her tolerance, her wide and agnostic in-

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clusiveness, her hospitality to various points of view, to even the heresies and heretics of all nations. An illuminating passage in Stendhal's autobiography, *The Life of Henri Brulard,* illustrates how thoroughly this was understood, even by Britain's enemies. In spite of his adoration of Napoleon, Stendhal reveals how passionately he wanted Napoleon to *fail* to conquer Britain, for "where could one have taken refuge then?"

In this day of American world leadership, however, even international-minded Americans demand uniformity of thought. In hortatory speeches and articles they constantly exhort us to develop an all-embracing *mystique* that will unify American and European intellectuals and form a spiritual bridge for the Grand Alliance of the Western world. This is the Platonic ideal, which has come near realization only in authoritarian systems. This is no ideal for a free world.

When have the intellectuals of a single country of the Western world been united, let alone the intellectuals of the whole Western world? In the days of the Renaissance? In the days of the Reformation? During the Enlightenment? In the nineteenth century? Even a penetrating study of the Middle Ages will reveal as much intellectual diversity as unity. The truth is that the Western world has never had intellectual unity, and it is too much to expect, with several kinds of revolutions—scientific, technological, economic, social, political, psychological—taking place in our midst, that we can achieve intellectual unity in the twentieth century.

The Western world can be true to itself only by clearly recognizing the inherent diversity and pluralism of its heritage, a diversity and pluralism which have been increasing century after century. The diversities of European thought are more consistent with the Western heritage of freedom than the growing uniformity of American thought. America's growing uniformity is essentially a betrayal of the American and of the Western heritage, and it is endangering the larger unity of the Western world.

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More about Philosophers in America

The article in the November issue of Humana on Spirito e Orientamento della Filosofia in America, excellent on its general theme, prompts me to add something concerning the special characters, backgrounds, and doctrines of the three persons considered.

It is only John Dewey who genuinely represents the mind of the vast mass of native, sanguine, enterprising Americans. He alone has formed a philosophic sect and become a dominant academic influence. He inherits the Puritan conscience, grown duly practical, democratic, and positivistic; and he accepts industrial society and scientific technique as the field where true philosophy may be cultivated and tested.

Dewey is a native of Vermont, the most rural and retired of the New England States, where philosophy was represented in his youth mainly by popular preachers: but his critical mind at once rejected all that seemed myth or dogma, and adopted the general outlook of Hegel, whom he still praises for his breadth of view. This initial attachment is important because it explains how society and history may be regarded as composing the reality ultimately to be appealed to in philosophy: the physical world and the individual mind

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Three American Philosophers

GEORGE SANTAYANA

THE ARTICLE in the November issue of *Humana* on *Spirito e Orientamento della Filosofia in America,* excellent on its general theme, prompts me to add something concerning the *special characters,* backgrounds and doctrines of the three persons considered.

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In middle life, Dewey passed to Chicago where he founded his school of pragmatic or instrumental logic; the atmosphere could not have been more radically practical and realistic. But the value

✪ GEORGE SANTAYANA, distinguished philosopher and poet, died last September in Rome.

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of pure disinterested speculation was duly acknowledged, because out of its apparently most useless flights important practical results may follow unexpectedly, as from the relativity of Einstein or the splitting of the atom.

Later, passing to New York, Dewey became a leader also in humanitarian and political movements, even far away from America, in China or in the Russia of Trotsky. From the centre of capitalist and imperialistic America he seemed to diffuse a contrary purely humanitarian influence; yet with a special qualification. Luxury and inequality were indeed to be deprecated: on the other hand, ignorance and poverty were to be extirpated all the world over. To remain simple peasants from generation to generation was not to be allowed. The whole world must be raised to American standards.

I think we may fairly say that in Dewey, devotion to the distinctly modern and American subject matter of social experience has caused him to ignore two prior realities which the existence of that experience presupposes. One reality is the material world in which this experience arises and by which its development is controlled. The other reality is the transcendental spirit by which that whole dramatic process is witnessed, reconsidered and judged. His system therefore may be called a social moralism, without cosmology and without psychological analysis.

In William James, on the contrary, who jointly with Dewey was the apostle of pragmatism, psychological analysis was the high court of appeal. His breeding and background were those of a man of the world and largely European, his education irregular, and his interests manifold. At first he wished to be a painter, then studied medicine, finally from medicine, or as a part of it, turned to psychiatry and psychology. In general philosophy he resisted the systematic Germans and followed the British empiricists, then represented by J. S. Mill. But there was another interest, contrary to a dry empiricism, which inwardly preoccupied him. His father was one of those independent American sages, in the style of Emerson and the Transcendentalists of New England, who possessed inarticulate profound insights and browsed on the mystic wisdom of all ages and countries. The son too had an irresistible intuition

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of spiritual freedom and, his wife being a Swedenborgian, was especially drawn to the study of psychical revelations. Ultimately he wrote his *Varieties of Religious Experience*—by far his most influential book—in which he showed his strong inclination to credit supernormal influences and the immortality of the soul.

All this, however, was a somewhat troubled hope which he conscientiously tested by all available evidence; and his most trusted authorities were often French, Renouvier and later Bergson; thus the textbook in psychology which we had under him in 1883, at Harvard, was Taine's *De l'Intelligence.* It was only much later that he produced the sensational theories by which he is known, at least by hearsay, all the world over: his *Pragmatism,* in which the reality of truth seemed to be denied, and his article entitled "Does Consciousness Exist?" where he answered this question in the negative.

In that article James takes an important, if not the final, step in the phenomenalistic analysis of experience. If we reject matter with Berkeley and spirit with Hume, we have only data or phenomena with which to compose the universe. But the immense extent and dark detail of nature, as science conceives them, are not data for human beings; if we are to credit science, as pragmatism should, we must therefore admit that the world is composed of phenomena that are self-existent; and those that fall within the magnetic field of our action will form our minds, while the rest, equally self-existent, will compose the rest of the universe. Things and ideas, on this view, are of the same stuff, but belong to different sequences or movements in nature. This system has been worked out later by Bertrand Russell and the school of "Logical Realists" or "Logical Analysts," and if it were found tenable would give William James a high place among modern philosophers.

As for me, it is only by accident that I am numbered among American philosophers. I cannot be classed otherwise, since I write in English and studied and taught for many years at Harvard College, near Boston. My mother's older children by her first marriage were Americans on their father's side; and that fact caused my father to take me to Boston to be educated. But in feeling and in

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legal allegiance I have always remained a Spaniard. My first philosophical enthusiasm was for Catholic theology; I admired, and still admire, that magnificent construction and the spiritual discipline it can inspire; but I soon learned to admire also Hellenistic and Indian wisdom. All religions and moralities seem to me forms of paganism; only that in ages of ripe experience or of decadence they become penitential and subjective. When a student my *vade mecum* was Lucretius; and of modern philosophers I never intimately accepted any except Spinoza, and in a measure Schopenhauer, if we may take "Will" to be a metaphorical substitute for the automatism of nature, as when he says that the Will to Live of a possible child causes young people to fall in love. I cannot understand what satisfaction a philosopher can find in artifices, or in deceiving himself and others. I therefore like to call myself a materialist; but I leave the study and also the worship of matter to others, and my later writings have been devoted to discovering the natural categories of my spontaneous thought, and restating my opinions in those honest terms. It is essentially a literary labour, a form of art; and I do not attempt to drive other people to think as I do. Let them be their own poets.

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Emerson's Tragic Sense

STEPHEN E. WHICHER

THERE IS SOMETHING ENIGMATIC about most American authors. Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, Whitman, Mark Twain, Emily Dickinson, Henry Adams, Henry James, Frost, Faulkner—each has his secret space, his halls of Thermes, his figure in the carpet, which is felt most strongly in his best work and yet eludes definition. Sometimes it is quite opposed to what its possessor thinks he is or wants to be: for example, Hawthorne, envying Trollope his sunshine and his sales, whose best story was "positively hell-fired"; or Whitman, affirmer of life, whose poetry is never more powerful than when it treats of death; Poe, who liked to think himself icily logical and who wrote best from a haunted fantasy; Mark Twain, professional joker and amateur pessimist; or Frost, tough and humorous individualist, whose best poems are often his saddest. Generally this is linked with an obscure fear or grief, even despair: American literature, closely read, is one of the least hopeful of literatures.

To all this, Emerson, representative American author that he is, is no exception. The more we know him, the less we know him. He can be summed up in a formula only by those who know their own minds better than his. We hear his grand, assuring words, but where is the man who speaks them? We know the part he played so well; we feel his powerful charm: we do not know the player. He is, finally, impenetrable, for all his forty-odd volumes.

Yet no man can write so much and so honestly and not reveal himself in some measure. We can see enough to sense in him an unusually large gap, even a contradiction, between his teachings and his experience. He taught self-reliance and felt self-distrust,

✪ STEPHEN WHICHER, associate professor of English literature at Swarthmore College, at present in Norway on a Fulbright fellowship, is now completing a book on Emerson. This year marks the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of Emerson's birth.

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worshiped reality and knew illusion, proclaimed freedom and submitted to fate. No one has expected more of man; few have found him less competent. There is an Emersonian tragedy and an Emersonian sense of tragedy, and we begin to know him when we feel their presence underlying his impressive confidence.

Of course I must stress the word "Emersonian" here. As Mark Van Doren has remarked, "Emerson had no theory of tragedy," unless to deny its existence is a theory. His oblivion can be prodigious.

> The soul will not know either deformity or pain. If, in the hours of clear reason, we should speak the severest truth, we should say that we had never made a sacrifice. In these hours the mind seems so great, that nothing can be taken from us that seems much. All loss, all pain, is particular; the universe remains to the heart unhurt. Neither vexations nor calamities abate our trust. No man ever stated his griefs as lightly as he might.

As he explained in his lecture on "The Tragic," the man who is grounded in the divine life will transcend suffering in a flight to a region "whereunto these passionate clouds of sorrow cannot rise."

Such transcendence of suffering is one of the great historic answers to tragedy and commands respect. To be valid, however, it must "cost not less than everything." Emerson seems to pay no such price. When, in the same lecture on "The Tragic," he tells the "tender American girl," horrified at reading of the transatlantic slave trade, that these crucifixions were not horrid to the obtuse and barbarous blacks who underwent them, "but only a little worse than the old sufferings," we wonder if he paid anything at all for his peace. The only coin in which we can discharge our debt to suffering is attention to it, but Emerson seems to evade this obligation.

Yet this chilling idealism is not simple insensitivity. Emerson is teaching his tested secret of insulation from calamity: Live in the Soul. His famous assertion in *Experience* of the unreality of his devastating grief for his son is an impressive illustration of the necessity he was under to protect, at whatever human cost, his hard-won security. Yeats has said somewhere that we begin to live when

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we have conceived life as tragedy. The opposite was true of Emerson. Only as he refused to conceive life as tragedy could he find the courage to live.

By denying man's fate, however, Emerson did not escape it. His urgent need to deny it shows that his confidence was more precarious than he would admit. Who has not felt the insistence, the over-insistence, in such radical claims to freedom and power as *Self-Reliance*?

> Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers, and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort, and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

What speaks here is self-*dis*trust, a distrust so pervasive that it must find an "absolutely trustworthy" seated at the heart before it can trust at all. Self-reliance, in the oft-cited phrase, is God-reliance, and therefore not self-reliance. Contrast the accent of a genuine individualist like Ibsen: "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." Or recall a truly self-reliant American: "It was about this time I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. . . . For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method. . . ." The free and easy assurance of Franklin is just what is missing in Emerson.

Certainly the first thirty years or so showed no great self-trust. A tubercular, like many in his family (two brothers died of the disease), he was engaged throughout his twenties in a serious battle of life and death in which he was not at all sure of winning.

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With his poor health went a disheartening self-criticism. He imagined he was incurably idle and self-indulgent, without force or worldly competence, constrained in the company of others, unresponsive in his affections. Though his early journals often show a manly courage and good sense, the dominant mood is a sense of impotence. He lacks all power to realize his large ambitions and feels himself drifting, sometimes in humiliation, sometimes in wry amusement, before the inexorable flowing of time. He was the servant more than the master of his fate, he found in 1824; and later, in the depths of his illness, it seemed to him that he shaped his fortunes not at all. In all his life, he wrote, he obeyed a strong necessity.

The electrifying release of power brought to him by the amazing discovery, the start of his proper career, that God was within his own soul is understandable only against this early—indeed, this lifelong submission to a strong necessity. His subjection bred a longing for self-direction, all the stronger for his underlying sense of its impossibility. The force of his transcendental faith, and its almost willful extravagance, sprang from his need to throw off, against all probability and common sense, his annihilating dependence. He welcomed the paradoxical doctrine that "God dwells in thee" with uncritical delight, as the solution to all the doubts that oppressed him, and rushed in a Saturnalia of faith to spell out its revolutionary consequences for the solitary soul:

> . . . The world is nothing, the man is all; . . . in yourself slumbers the whole of Reason; it is for you to know all, it is for you to dare all. . . .
>
> . . . The height, the deity of man is, to be self-sustained, to need no gift, no foreign force. . . . All that you call the world is the shadow of that substance which you are, the perpetual creation of the powers of thought, of those that are dependent and of those that are independent of your will. . . . You think me the child of my circumstances: I make my circumstance. . . .
>
> . . . Every rational creature has all nature for his dowry and estate. It is his, if he will. He may divest himself of it; he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do, but he is entitled to the world by his constitution. . . .

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Yet this proclamation of the kingdom of man was always what he soon came to call it, a romance. He retained a common-sense awareness (and so retains our respect) that experience did not support it. Not merely were all manipular attempts to realize his kingdom premature and futile. The Power within, from which all capacity stemmed, was itself wayward. The individual relying on it was a mere pipe for a divine energy that came and went as it willed. With this hidden life within him, man was no longer hopeless, but he was still helpless. "I would gladly," Emerson wrote at the age of forty-one, ". . . allow the most to the will of man, but I have set my heart on honesty in this chapter, and I can see nothing at last, in success or failure, than more or less of vital force supplied from the Eternal."

When Emerson wrote *The American Scholar,* seven years earlier, his imagination had kindled to a blaze at the thought of the divine power latent in the soul. Give way to it, let it act, and the conversion of the world will follow. As this millennial enthusiasm inevitably waned, the old helplessness it had contradicted emerged unaltered from the flames. The result was a head-on clash of belief and fact. His vision of man as he might be only intensified the plight of man as he was. Something resembling the Fall of Man, which he had so ringingly denied, reappears in his pages.

It is not sin now that troubles him, but "the incompetency of power." One may accuse Providence of a certain parsimony.

> It has shown the heaven and earth to every child, and filled him with a desire for the whole; a desire raging, infinite; a hunger, as of space to be filled with planets; a cry of famine, as of devils for souls. Then for the satisfaction,—to each man is administered a single drop, a bead of dew of vital power, *per day*,—a cup as large as space, and one drop of the water of life in it. Each man woke in the morning with an appetite that could eat the solar system like a cake; a spirit for action and passion without bounds; he could lay his hand on the morning star; he could try conclusions with gravitation or chemistry; but, on the first motion to prove his strength,—hands, feet, senses, gave way, and would not serve him. He was an emperor deserted by his states, and left to whistle by himself, or thrust into a mob of emperors, all whistling: and still the sirens sang, "The attractions are proportioned to the destinies." In every house, in the heart of each maiden and of each boy, in the soul of the soaring saint, this chasm is found,—between the largest promise of ideal power and the shabby experience.

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This chasm is the Emersonian tragedy, a tragedy of incapacity. Man's reach must exceed his grasp, of course; that is not tragic. Emerson's chasm cuts deeper: between a vision that claims all power now, and an experience that finds none. Emerson's thought of the self was split between a total Yes and a total No, which could not coexist, could not be reconciled, and yet were both true. "Alas for this infirm faith, this will not strenuous, this vast ebb of a vast flow! I am God in nature; I am a weed by the wall."

There is an Emersonian skepticism as well as an Emersonian faith. Of the seven "lords of life" he distinguishes in his key essay, *Experience*, five are principles of weakness. A man is slave to his moods and his temperament, swept like a bubble down the stream of time, blinded and drugged with illusion, the captive of his senses—in a word, the creature of a strong necessity. To be sure, the God is a native of the bleak rocks of his isolation, and can at any moment surprise and cheer him with new glimpses of reality. But for all this miraculous consolation, he has no will or force of his own; self-reliant is precisely what he can never be. *The American Scholar*'s assurance of the unsearched might of man is a feat of faith in view of the actual humiliating human predicament, "with powers so vast and unweariable ranged on one side, and this little, conceited, vulnerable popinjay that a man is, bobbing up and down into every danger, on the other."

It goes without saying that one can easily overstate the case for a tragic sense in Emerson. *Experience*, for instance, is not a tragic-sounding essay. Perhaps "sense of loss" would be more accurate; I have deliberately chosen a controversial term, in order to stress a side of Emerson often overlooked. For all his loss of millennial hope, Emerson in fact came to allow much to the will of man, as any reader of *The Conduct of Life* can see. Nor do I mean to suggest that he did not find the secret of a serene and affirmative life. The evidence is overwhelming that he did. My point is that his serenity was a not unconscious *answer* to his experience of life, rather than an inference from it (even when presented as such). It was an act of faith, forced on him by what he once called "the ghastly reality of things." Only as we sense this tension of faith

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and experience in him can we catch the quality of his affirmation. He *had* to ascribe more reality to his brief moments of "religious sentiment" than to the rest of life, or he could not live.

The way he did so altered sensibly, as his first excess of faith in man diminished. A gentle resignation came to settle over his thought of human nature, an elegiac recognition that life perpetually promises us a glory we can never realize. As it did so, the center of his faith traveled imperceptibly from man to the order that included him. In moments of faith, as he explained even in the midst of his essay on *Self-Reliance*, "The soul raised over passion beholds identity and eternal causation, perceives the self-existence of Truth and Right, and calms itself with knowing that all things go well." Such dogmatic optimism, always a part of his faith, became more and more its sole content as his first dream of a kingdom of Man dwindled into reasonableness.

Emerson the optimist said some shallow and callous things, as he did in his lecture on "The Tragic." To restore our sympathy with his humanity, we must glimpse the prisoner that now and then looked out of the eyes above the smile. Within, he was sovereign, a guide, redeemer and benefactor; without, he was a lecturing and publishing old gentleman. Each time his inner promise of ideal power came up against the narrow limits of his experience, the response could only be the same—a renewed surrender to the Power that planned it that way.

He did not surrender to necessity because he found it good, so much as he found it good because he surrendered. Recurrently the Good he recognizes is more conspicuous for power than for goodness, a "deaf, unimplorable, immense fate," to which all man-made distinctions of good and ill are an impertinence. In some of his poems, particularly, those that have eyes to see may watch him swept into entranced submission to "the over-god" by the compulsion of his personal problems. This is how he meets the impossible challenge of social action, in the "Ode" to Channing. So the teasing evanescence of his moments of insight into reality is submerged in "The World-Soul." He bows to the same power for a bleak consolation in his "Threnody" for his son:

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Silent rushes the swift Lord
Through ruined systems still restored,
Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
Plants with worlds the wilderness;
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
House and tenant go to ground,
Lost in God, in Godhead found.

In such poems we feel the hunger for strength that sent him first to his grand doctrine of Self-Reliance, and then swung him to its polar opposite, a worship of the Beautiful Necessity.

Like all puritans, Emerson was an extremist: he had to have entire assurance, or he had none at all. Though we have a tradition of mature tragedy in our literature, American authors have typically made the same demand. Either they have risen to his transcendental trust, like Thoreau and Whitman; or they have accepted shoddy substitutes, like Norris or Sandburg or Steinbeck; or they have dropped into blackness, like Henry Adams or Jeffers. Emerson himself teetered on the edge of this drop, as did Thoreau and Whitman too, sustained by little more than their own power of belief. Since then the impulse to believe has become progressively feebler and the drop quicker and harder, until now, John Aldridge tells us, our honest writers *start* in the pit. If we are ever to have a great literature again, one would conclude, it will not be until we can break decisively with the whole extremist Emersonian pattern and find some means to face this world without either transcendence or despair.

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Party Line History

ANATOLE G. MAZOUR

THE FATE OF THE SCIENTISTS who toil under strict surveillance of Communist ideology is not an enviable one; the fate of the historian is even worse: it is a truly tragic fate. This is largely due to the uncertainties and frequent vicissitudes of the party line, which have a fatal bearing upon the writings and the interpretations of history. The historians who toe the party line are frequently out of step with the one declared by the Politburo. This immediately results in official disapprobation of only recently accepted theses and, what is worse, virtually dooms the writers unless they humbly march to Canossa and pledge to "reform" and write in accordance with the latest dictates of the ideological interpreters.

The origin of the historian's plight lies in the Communist assumption that correct historical interpretation can be achieved and the course of history comprehended by one, and only one, method —the Marxian diagnosis. Unfortunately the Marxist diagnosis, particularly in the sphere of Soviet politics, is an elusive one to say the least; it is so flexible as to turn in the direction of the party weathercock regardless of whether it points to historical truth. Woe to the historian who fails to forecast the direction of the ideological storms that periodically descend upon him. Failure to take timely heed of the latest deviation in party line results at best in serious political castigation, at worst (which is more frequent) in physical and mental torment which drives the best of the historical profession into intellectual sterility.

Modern Russian historiography dates to the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the time the Communists came to power

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in October, 1917, they found the historical field richly cultivated by a legion of historians of whom the nation could be justly proud. From Karamzin, through Soloviev to Kliuchevsky, Miliukov and Platonov, there is a line of eminent scholars who established a historical tradition that not even the turmoil of the Revolution could obliterate. Curiously enough, these historians are all flippantly lumped into a single pile and classified as the "old school," the "bourgeois writers," and their interpretation stamped as "capitalistic." This, however, does not prevent the present-day rulers from utilizing their works whenever these "capitalistic" writings happen to fit into the Communist pattern of historical narrative.

The eminent court historian who assumed power immediately after Communist ascendancy was M. Pokrovsky. An old Marxist and party member since 1905, Pokrovsky already had to his credit a long list of publications. During the years preceding the Revolution, his extensive works were all carried out within the pattern of economic determinism and class struggle. The entire record of the past, regardless of whether it pertained to cultural, purely artistic, social or religious developments, was couched in economic terms.

After October, 1917, Pokrovsky, as dean of the Marxist historians and chairman of the Academic Council, commenced to wield his extraordinary power in order to regiment all historians. Methods of writing as well as interpretation of history were prescribed by setting up specific goals and oversimplified purposes. History was conceived as a vast field that embraced a variety of disciplines, including sociology, economics and philosophy, with a sprinkling of "class psychology," all tinged, naturally, with Marxian determinism. The old school was delivered a serious blow, while its members were either silenced at home or forced to flee abroad.

For some fifteen years the Pokrovsky school was given free reign. Under its domination Russian history was turned into a narrative which virtually justified the cynical view that history is nothing but complex truth transformed into simplified falsehood. Russia's past was pictured as a mere arena on which "ex-

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ploiter and exploited, master and slave, patrician and plebeian, and in our day proletarian and capitalist" continually contended for power. On occasions the nobility and the gentry combined with the military; and these, led by royal puppets, fought the masses in order to bring about a more efficient state for the exploitation of the latter. From time to time the former combination, not satisfied with exploiting their own people, by means of mendacious diplomacy and outright war managed to annex periphery states and incorporate national minorities, thus forming the twentieth-century heterogeneous Russian Empire. For fifteen years or so, this was the essence of what was taught in Soviet schools.

In 1931, shortly before Pokrovsky's death, Soviet leaders commenced to realize that this simple interpretation of history made no sense. The signal for overt rebellion against Pokrovsky was given by Stalin himself in an open letter to the magazine *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia,* severely taking to task the schematic and abstract nature of this historical writing. On May 16, 1934, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR issued a decree which ordered the preparation of new textbooks: one on ancient history, another on medieval, a third on modern history, a fourth on the USSR and a fifth on colonial countries. These texts were ordered to present greater emphasis upon historical facts, historical figures and chronological data; the authors were advised to avoid "vulgar sociological generalities and schematic deductions."

After some two years the results of the assignment were presented to the government. The authorities, including Stalin himself, carefully scrutinized the manuscripts and declared the first one, dealing with the history of the USSR, as totally unacceptable. The second work, pertaining to western Europe, was pronounced more adequate, though in need of serious revision. The main change, however, was that the formerly omnipotent Pokrovsky school was dealt a fatal blow. The event marked a rapid decline and virtual liquidation of the old Marxian presentation of history and a dispersal of Pokrovsky's disciples.

The bewildered student of history asked himself with dismay: What has happened? What kind of history is the government ex-

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pecting now, and what precisely has provoked this about-face? The reason for this complete change is not difficult to find, however. The new demand was an accentuation of formerly frowned-upon nationalistic interpretation. Why? Because internal and particularly external developments forced a departure to the right. The Soviet leaders came to regard the ascendancy of nazism and the consolidation of the Nazi-Fascist front a most portentous event; the Kremlin also came to regard the temporary rehabilitation of capitalism in western Europe as a grave threat to the Soviet Union. World revolution had been delivered a setback, and in order to defend "the only socialist country in the world" and the "bastion of proletarian dictatorship," the government was ready to employ every means and flirt with alien principles. If nationalism and patriotism, formerly held in total contempt, could be effectively exploited in the defense of the USSR, these should be employed without a flicker of doubt. It did not matter whether these were in conflict with the basic faith of the Communist party—the main goal was the saving of the Soviet fatherland. To instill in the nation a spirit of resistance against any foreign aggression, the Soviet leaders knew that Marxism alone was not enough; an appeal to patriotic sentiments would be far more effective. Hence the campaign launched for the glorification of the past, with its cry for the defense of the beloved fatherland and the brazen appeal to "Soviet patriotism."

The shift from internationalism to narrow nationalism was so sudden that many of the orthodox Marxists were caught off guard. They were not quick enough to realign their thinking, and for this lack of ideological plasticity or compliance they paid most dearly. Such were the circumstances which brought forth Soviet patriotism and a homespun nationalism. The paradox was striking, but as long as ends justified means it was comprehensible. If world revolution could be attained by nationalistic means, why not exploit them? To be sure, the weapon had to be handled with extreme caution: in a land where nearly half the people were not of Russian origin, the new policy might inspire enough local nationalistic pride to constitute a centrifugal force beyond control.

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However, the political gamble was worth the stakes for which the government played, and the Second World War proved that the policy paid off impressive dividends.

Soviet nationalism accelerated the urgency for a new history, which, by order of the government, was to be presented by various authors. The new interpretations in these quickly created texts were striking: Aggressive wars became progressive or defensive conflicts, or justified struggles for the formation of a strong national state. Formerly condemned sovereigns became respectable and sagacious statesmen, while some of their tyrannical policies were mellowed and interpreted as either moderate measures or as means provoked by necessity to subdue blind reactionary elements within the nation. Old generals formerly held in total contempt and pictured as enemies of the people now appeared as great national heroes. The incorporation of peripheral states came as a result of a manifest destiny or logical national growth and in desperate search for outlets to the sea; even the tsarist adventure in the Far East in 1904-1905 was now presented as a conflict provoked by Japanese imperialism. Not many historians were successful in fulfilling the demands for such a new history. The rejection was frequent and criticism of the offered texts vehement. Judging by the officially adopted and much praised standard text of Professor A. V. Shestakov, *A Brief History of the USSR*, the contest must have been a sorrowful affair. Shestakov's textbook was a triumph of mediocrity and only a temporary answer to the dictates of an omnipotent government that ruled academic life. The book was definitely inadequate, even in the existing circumstances, and the government persistently continued to demand other and more adequate standard textbooks.

The war years retarded development, but no sooner did the war come to an end than the issue came up anew, creating even greater tenseness. Postwar Soviet foreign policy revived hopes for world revolution, and the problem of harmonizing nationalism at home and revolutionary activities abroad became the issue of the day. Despite all the purges in the thirties, there were still deeply rooted sentiments which favored orthodox Marxian or Pokrovsky

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methods of historical writing. Those who held these views were now dubbed the "cosmopolites," against whom a campaign was raised with special fury. Heated discussions, recriminations and violent attacks were conducted against the cosmopolites, accompanied by their dismissals from influential positions in the historical profession.

On January 8, 1949, I. Mints, member of the Academy, a pupil of the late Pokrovsky and an avowed Communist, delivered before the historical-philosophical section a paper entitled "Lenin and the Development of the Historical Science." After paying the conventional compliments to the great and the incomparable genius Stalin, the author smuggled in his main thesis. Shielding himself with references to Lenin, Mints stated:

> Writers who evaluate historical phenomena of recent years reveal most serious defects. One of them is a departure from class consciousness. Another is a confusion of bourgeois nationalistic patriotism, which in essence conceals bourgeois chauvinism with soviet patriotism. . . . Such departure from the singly correct scientific point of view is possible only because of the inadequate assimilation of Marxism-Leninism. It is also a result of neglected application of party principles to science and a decline in the alertness to bourgeois ideologies. All this is due to the absence of genuine criticism, and self-criticism of principles.

Mints had the courage to deliver a verdict in no mild terms against "bourgeois nationalism," but what is of special note is that he buttressed his thesis with references to Marx and Lenin and only casually mentioned Stalin. More than that, the deduction one can readily make is Mints's alarm over the departure in recent historical writings from Lenin's teachings. Small wonder that Mints soon fell under the shadow of suspicion, with all the consequences that usually ensue from so precarious a status. The Marxist and Leninist pupil who demonstrated excessive reverence for his teachers and insufficient respect for the latest dictates in the field of historical science was immediately declared an anti-Marxist and virtually banned from his profession. With him seven other members of the editorial board of the *Voprosy istorii,* the

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organ of the historical profession, shared his fate by being removed from their posts. Simultaneously Mints was also replaced as chairman of the historical section of the Academy of Sciences as well as secretary of the board for the writing of a history of the civil war.

The purge did not stop here, but was pursued further against other cosmopolites, who were accused of favoring Western bourgeois ideas of a world government, of a United Nations dominated by the United States, of a European Union, of an Atlantic Pact, and similar organizations which were in total conflict with genuine Soviet internationalism and Soviet patriotism. Before long the authorities began to drag out more soiled party linen against the diversionists, finding them guilty of favoring the German school of historians and other heresies of similar nature. Within a few months, the entire board set up for the writing of the history of the civil war, with the exception of one member, was liquidated.

This is only one of the numerous episodes that illustrate the constant shifts and precarious crises which Soviet historians have to face. In such circumstances one will justly ask where Soviet historiography is going. In 1949, the Academic Council of the historical section of the Academy of Sciences adopted a resolution for a five-year plan to wage a struggle against bourgeois objectivism and cosmopolitan tendencies. Since that time the writing of history has not shown much progress beyond an everlasting debate and wrangling, accompanied by venomous accusations and blistering counter-accusations against ideological heretics. There is not even an agreement on the periodization of Russian history, a subject which has been violently argued since December, 1948, when the Academic Council of the Academy of Sciences opened the debate. Yet the government continues to insist upon creative writing, and emphasizes the need of a greater volume of works, especially in recent history. But this is precisely the field that is the most hazardous to touch, for fear of provoking dreaded accusation of misapprehension of the party line. Hence a mass desertion into safer realms—such as anthropology, ancient history, or mere compilation of documents.

The mass departure of scholars into safer fields remote from

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current history could not long escape the attention of the authorities. In a leading editorial of *Voprosy istorii*, the issue was bluntly laid down; and a verdict pronounced in no uncertain terms that it is impossible to call the situation a normal one when the majority of young scholars devote their writings to such themes as the "Assyrian Patriarchal Family," while there is a lamentable lack of books on current history. This, the same editorial states, causes serious damage to the Soviet state, to the party, and to the upbringing of the new generation of scholars. What is needed is more attention to such subjects as colonial history, the rise of nationalism in Asia and Africa, and Leninist-Stalinist theories concerning national and colonial problems. Instead one finds a phenomenon such as is well illustrated in the publication of the Orientologists. The May issue of 1948 contains ten articles, of which two are devoted to ancient history, five to the medieval period, two to the eighteenth century, and only one to the middle of the nineteenth. The twentieth century is not even touched—nothing about the revolutionary movements, the editorial asserts vehemently, nothing about the economic transformation in Asia and Africa, no word about the peasant movement in the Far East. This, the author of the same editorial concludes, is an anomalous and intolerable state of affairs. The editorial fails to point out the real causes for this anomaly. It simply commands Soviet historians to descend from their academic towers, cast off their bourgeois objectivism, and reveal the predatory policies of the Western imperialist powers in the Orient.

Official disapproval of this lack of interest in the "Stalin era" and absorbing curiosity in ancient history expressed itself in frequent shifts in membership of the various editorial boards and historical organizations throughout the Soviet Union. But all these administrative measures produced as much result as the reseating of the musicians in the famous fable of Krylov, "The Quartet"—there is still no music! The thematic problem in Soviet historiography remains a lively issue and an unsolved one. It is bound to remain a burning issue as long as the historian is compelled to write by orders from above and to deliver interpretations to fit

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the Stalinist thesis. There is not the slightest indication as yet that the Soviet bureaucracy is able to comprehend or is willing to conceive the issue before it; the masters simply demand in the face of all difficulties an absolute and unconditional surrender. As to the younger historians who produce histories that meet government approval, and even from time to time receive Stalin prizes, the best that can be said about these emotionally vagrant works is that their "monumentality" will last as long as the Stalin prize remains the coveted object as a badge of political security.

Soviet nationalism forced a new interpretation of Russian territorial expansion. Having condemned bourgeois and capitalistic imperialism, party leaders found themselves facing the dilemma of explaining the control over the vast territorial expanse which the USSR had inherited from Imperial Russia. Though opposing nationalism as an obsolete capitalistic philosophy, the Communist leaders created a special brand of nationalism which is now subservient to communism. Whereas, they say, capitalistic nationalism is merely a device for imperialism and the exploitation of colonial peoples, Soviet nationalism spells fraternal ties with other nations. This is all very well, but it still does not explain the territorial legacy. How then must the Soviet historian interpret Russia's past without arousing national consciousness of the minorities within the USSR? This is a delicate problem, fraught with political danger.

It is a universally known fact that originally the Communist party looked upon such ideas as fatherland, patriotic loyalty, love of one's country as purely bourgeois notions. The very idea of a Russian empire under a single government was considered by the Communists as an anomaly. Prior to their ascendance to power, and even during the maiden years of political control, the Communists loudly proclaimed the right of any national group within the former Russian state to determine its own future. These proclamations made a wide appeal, especially to the oppressed minorities who aspired to autonomous rights, if not outright independence; it made a profound impression also upon colonial peoples who looked to Moscow as the champion of their cause. It was not long before the national minorities began to learn Soviet

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realities in earnest. Marx's pronouncement that the proletariat has no fatherland proved a false assumption a century later.

By the middle of the thirties, as we have noted, Marxist cosmopolitan views passed through a complete revolutionary change: textbooks began to present former "imperialistic lackeys" as national heroes, while champions of national minorities who insisted upon national self-determination became the villains. Thus Mazeppa, the eighteenth-century Ukrainian national hero, was now a traitor; while the Georgian ruler Heraclius, who sought Russian protection and was instrumental in the annexation of his country by Catherine, was elevated to the rank of a national hero. The absorption of national groups by the former tsarist government was no longer regarded as an act of aggression but presented as "natural expansion"; territorial annexations along frontiers were now interpreted as normal extensions of a superior civilization. Historians were ordered to interpret the past in the vein of old-fashioned nationalism, while earlier textbooks of the Pokrovsky era were banned as harmful and "depraved" (*porochnye*) writings.

According to the latest interpretation, annexations of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldavia, Chuvashia, the Ukraine, and the Caucasus were all the results of a logical historical development, carrying an advanced civilization into culturally and economically retarded areas. For the new and best presentation of history textbooks, Stalin prizes were announced, and in a few cases actually awarded. In one case the prize awarded was shortly, after a closer scrutiny, canceled. In some cases, exhilarating somersaults have been performed by ready-to-serve historians. Thus the aspiration to gain control over the straits in the Near East, tsarist policies in China and in the Far and Middle East—all were rehabilitated and accounted for as healthy impulses as well as culturally progressive policies of the former tsars. This vivid falsification is all performed with one end in view—to solidify the position of the USSR, to cement the sixteen republics, and to tolerate no centrifugal national tendencies.

One instance of most recent occurrence will suffice to illustrate the historical gyrations performed. In May, 1952, the monthly *Voprosy istorii*, joined by the two dailies, *Pravda* and *Izvestiia*,

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opened a salvo against the writers of Crimean history. Basically the reason for this latest attack was the same, the spurious superpatriotic motive. Slavic historical tradition, declared the latest critics, was far more deeply rooted in Crimean history than has been commonly recognized by students of history. The Scythians, whose origins had always been a very debatable subject and never determined with certainty, were now confirmed as no more than pure-blooded Slavs; the Tatars who inhabit Crimea were comparative newcomers, not entitled to lay claim to the entrenched historical tradition usually assigned to them.

Thus a highly problematic issue was presented by the bureaucracy with more dogmatic than scholarly evidence at a recent conference at Simferopol. The assembled scholars were told that the Slavs had always played a most prominent role, which had hardly been acknowledged formerly; all previous writings which placed an emphasis upon the role of the Crimean khans simply reflected "bourgeois nationalism." When one recalls the recent fate of the Tatars, whose autonomous republic has been abolished and many of whom were dispersed as a result of their collaboration with the enemy during the last war, the historical discovery either at Simferopol or by the mentioned publications needs no further comment. One is reminded of Mussolini's research in the racial origin of the Italian people, with its predetermined conclusion, adopted by the Fascist-appointed savants, that the Italians are of definite Aryan origin.

The exploitation of the historical profession for party politics is the most striking if not alarming fact. The assigned "research work" in the history of the national minorities, border states, and the Russian people, and the annual awards that are pontifically announced, are all well and good so long as the research satisfies the foregone conclusions. Woe to the historian who delivers disappointing results, as the violent criticisms from time to time against the members of the Ukrainian, White Russian or Georgian Academies testify. The frequent accusations against Kirghiz, Ossetian, Kazakhstan and other writers of being "bourgeois objectivists" who lack ideological perception are further proof, if proof is necessary, that the path of the Soviet historian is a thorny one.

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Sojourn

FRANCES COLVIN

After I learned the language,
I came to love the land:
The secret valleys, and the high plateau.
It took a longer time to understand
Which wind would bring the snow;
And often I observed
With sorrow and surprise
The complicated rage
That fell from simple skies.

✪ The poetry of FRANCES COLVIN has been presented in a variety of publications. Her last poem to appear in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR was in the Winter, 1952-1953, issue.

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Small Experiment in Civilization

BROOKS ATKINSON

THIS IS AN INFORMAL REPORT on a working project in civilization. Since you may not value it as highly as I do, let me explain: I have been cutting brush in the field where our miniature spruces are planted. Since the hours seemed long in the hot sun that boiled over the mountains, and since the work was methodical and solitary, I had plenty of time to ruminate. "What will these dainty little trees be like a half-century from now?" I asked myself as I cut the wild tangle of brush from around them, freeing them from savage competition and bringing them into the sunlight.

"Is there anything in human society," I also asked myself, "that has such a secure and normal future?" Fifty years from now this gray, worn field will support an imposing forest of dark green spires where the owls will be living in seclusion and the crossbills and pine grosbeaks will feed in the winter. To a man laboring amid the angry throng of locust thickets, that was an intoxicating prospect. I have been especially fond of these baby trees ever since they were set out as seedlings five years ago. When I project my imagination into their future, I find myself working among them with respect and envy.

But the comparison between their future and the future of the human race is not quite so simple as that. Most of us romanticize or sentimentalize nature. When we look with admiration at a forest or landscape, the beauty, the dignity and the apparent peace of nature seem to rebuke the jangle and shrillness of human affairs. We ascribe to nature enduring virtues that are lacking in our restless society, and we rebuke ourselves for anguish that seems to be lacking in nature.

That is not wholly borne out by the facts. Look closely at nature and you will see cruel insurrections in the marauding life of ants

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or regimented labor in the selfless life of bees. By cutting brush, for example, I was rescuing the spruce trees from piracy and murder; for the locust, ash, maple and thorn apple thickets were starving and choking them. There is no peace in nature if you look closely enough. But it is true that on this south-rolling hill, under the green-banked mountains and beneath the blue sky, there was none of the clattering, bloody, desperate carnage that is common in the world of men. I felt expansive among the trees; I seemed to be at peace with everything. In honor of a pine tree he saw in the Maine woods, Thoreau once wrote: "It is as immortal as I am, and perchance will go to as high a heaven, and there tower above me still." Such fancies drifted lazily through my mind while I was swinging the bush hook or reaching in with the brush clippers.

When Lowell encountered Thoreau's paean to a pine tree in a manuscript for the *Atlantic Monthly*, he arrogantly crossed it out, for he was no transcendentalist and would not tolerate heresy in his pages. Although I am amused by this peevish instance of Lowell's gentility, I do not accept Thoreau's humble lyric to a pine tree without reservation. It lies close to the problem of the whole relationship of man and nature. As a votary of nature I pin part of my faith on immortality; for all I know, the immortality of a pine tree may be as radiant as mine, if not more so. But the spruce trees and I make different requisitions on life, and I am unable to believe that mine are not higher. Mine are worth fighting and dying for, and they promise a future that will be more glorious if it can be achieved. If we exalt nature at the expense of man, we must first assume that the dream of civilization has been a mistake.

Although nature is our mother, she is not a complete guide to human conduct. By virtue of intelligence we are creating things she knows nothing about. If the natural man were the ideal man, the red Indian, who used to hunt in this field, would be the peak of culture. No, we have imagined things that nature has never dreamed of. We have written poetry that turns sound into song and evokes beauty out of thought and feeling. We have made music and joined hands in dancing. We have learned how to use nature's grass seeds as the first principle of agriculture—a bounti-

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ful art and science that can feed the world. We have learned how to stamp out diseases. No one knows how many fears we have exorcised from the darkness of primitive minds. We have liberated men from a million mindless states of being and drawn up a ground plan for a brave new world.

Unlike the spruce trees, we are trying to impose a pattern of intelligence on the random ways of nature. Out of the prodigality of nature we are trying to shape life into a keen and lustrous modern design. We have even dreamed of justice and good will, which lie entirely outside the experience of growing spruce trees. Alas, our progress toward justice and good will has been a painful one. Millions of men have had to die for it and lie in the ground and leave nothing save memories of valor and devotion. But do we give up on that account? Or, to look at it from another point of view, shall I leave the spruce trees to their fate and let the wild brush stamp them out? Although we are captains of our souls, we are not masters of our destiny; but over a period of several thousands of years we have never ceased trying to make life intelligent, just and free. We will keep on trying, and the world will be the better for whatever we achieve.

In the middle of the field I left a few sumacs. They are brush, but they have a gentle disposition. They do not crowd. They do not greedily devour all the sunshine or drink all the rain. Moreover, they have an ancient and exotic shape, like a wise phrase out of an old prayer; and they are beautiful. I kept a jug of well water in the feathery shade they made. When I felt parched and my back seemed to have a permanent tilt forward, I lay down under the sumacs, drank out of the jug and rested. Probably I rested too long, for I never finished all the brush in the field, and had to summon two venerable brush cutters from the village to finish the job after I had to go back to work in the city.

But the more my poor body ached, the pleasanter my thoughts became. One of the things I enjoyed mulling over was the history of this field. It seemed to me to illustrate some of the history of the race, and perhaps it foretold some of our future. For a century and a half, men have dominated this field by imposing on it the pattern of civilized life. There has been a full cycle of culture here, and,

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I am inclined to think, a good one on the whole. Until after the American Revolution it was primeval forest—largely hemlock, I believe. Plenty of deer cross the field now; they may, in fact, be more numerous now than they were when the Indians hunted these mountains. But there were other sorts of game that are much scarcer now, like bear and lynx and wolf. There were also wild pigeons, which have disappeared from America, although such a thing must have been impossible to imagine then. When the field was part of primeval nature, I imagine it was a somberly overwhelming place.

After the Revolution it yielded to a new order. Some enterprising young men, bearing the English name of Chittendon, came from Connecticut and straightway proceeded to cultivate these acres. They felled the trees and probably burned most of them. They tore the stumps and roots out of the ground—a staggering labor. So they let the sunlight in, broke up the ground and raised corn, grain and grasses, no doubt rejoicing in the improvements they had wrung out of their backs. It was a good lot because it faced the sun, drained well and could be worked early in the spring when most fields were still too wet and cold. What had been wild thus became cultivated and helped to sustain human life. It put the sun, rain and soil to work according to a plan.

After laboring so hard to establish a cultivated field, the Chittendons naturally took good care of it. They carefully mowed back to the stone walls every summer to keep the brush from crowding free acres. Their horses and oxen plowed the field many times; and after long, arduous days at the plow handles the Chittendons, who were great people on this hill, must have looked back at it with pride as they drove up the road to the barn. Small as it was, the field had a place in the community. Hundreds of drovers and travelers, riding along the toll road to the river, looked at it and, like country people of all times, probably commented on the crops it bore. Three generations of Chittendons saw the field outlast them as arable land.

When I acquired the field a quarter of a century ago from the last hard-scrabble farmer who owned the place, it had just produced a crop of buckwheat. It should have been seeded to grass the

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next spring. But I am no farmer, and, having a great many other things to do at the time, I let the field stand idle for about nine years. That was a shiftless thing to do. The field was nearly ruined by neglect. Brush began to march in from the wild pasture below and bind the ground with a tangle of root systems. After experimenting none too successfully with red pine seedlings in another part of the farm, I finally decided to try a crop of white spruce transplants on this field to reclaim it from brush land.

In mid-April I got five thousand miniature trees, three years old, from the state nursery. A gang of six men, all neighbors, planted them in two days—four thousand in this field, the fifth thousand filling out the red pine lot. It was a jovial planting bee, full of laughter and gossip; and if it helps to plant even a tiny tree in good humor, these white spruces have had the best sort of blessing.

For two years one could not see the little trees without patiently hunting for them. For the next two years they began to appear in dark rows in the spring after the snow had gone off the flattened grass. But last year the field was bursting with eagerness and glowing with vitality. For the trees were beginning to poke above the grass. Some of them were three feet high, having grown a foot in a dry season. The hairlike roots had spread well and taken firm hold of the soil. The bark was becoming rough and mature. The trunks, which had been like lead pencils originally, were getting tough, thick and chunky.

A few little trees of that sort would not make much impression on a wild field. But to see four thousand of them silently taking over the field and possessing it and growing with confidence and fervor was to be filled with rejoicing. Something was reaching up into free air with ecstasy. During a period of harrowing destruction throughout the world, the trees had begun to live constructively. Although they did not fight, they were conquering. It was my field when I planted them five years ago. But it will not be my field much longer.

Nevertheless, I find it pleasant to reflect that they need me now. Unless I remember them in the days of their youth, they will not amount to much. For, mind you, planting a forest is not a promiscuous job, but an experiment in civilization. Nature has

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provided the trees with life, as she has provided me, but she is mindless. Although she has resources of life in overwhelming abundance, she breeds recklessly and wastefully. Locust grows a hundred times as fast as spruce in the early stages, and thorn apple transforms a good field into a jungle of ferocious prickles in a decade. You must fight them with bush hook and clippers. As the years go by, you must also make up your mind whether you are raising evergreens or hardwoods, for maple and ash grow like weeds once they get a footing.

Ever since the spruces were planted, I had been indolently hoping that if I cleared away only the locusts and thorn apples every year, the spruces would shoulder the hardwoods out of the way. But that was not the way things worked out. When I went down there last summer, it was clear that the hardwoods were well established as invaders. At the bottom of the field the ashes and maples were eight or ten feet high. Inside the hardwood thickets the spruces looked pale. Their leaves were delicate. Some of the trees were callously tipped to one side or bent out of shape by hardwoods that had sprung up beside them. In another year or two it would be too late to return the field to the evergreen family.

The time had come for action. Pulling off my shirt, I took action then and there. At first it was heartbreaking work, for there were ten hardwoods to every spruce in the invaded sections. But after a quarter of the field had been cleared, it was a joy to see the spruces coming confidently to the surface and gazing gratefully at the sheltering sky. It was like meeting a crowd of individuals. There was not an uninteresting tree in the whole four thousand. We were fast getting acquainted, and the sympathy I began to feel for individual trees became fantastic.

You realize what is happening. After serving for a century and a half as crop land, the field is returning to forest. Men imposed their civilization on nature by taking it out of wild forest. Now another man is imposing a forest culture on it again. The cycle is closing. Has anything been lost or stolen? The new forest that is now growing will lack the sweet disorder and vagrancy of primeval forest land. No, it will not be like some dim-lit groves of majestic trees I have reverently tramped through in remote mountain

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passes. But the timber will be straighter and more evenly grown, and the field will be better used. Although the chemistry of growth will be the same, this will be a planned forest, cultivated by human beings.

Unfortunately, I shall not be here to look up in wonder at the pointed crowns of the spruce trees sixty or seventy-five years from now. But as I lay under the sumacs, resting from my labors, it gave me enormous pleasure to mull over the whole project in mind and imagination. Using the science that other people have developed out of their intelligence, my neighbors and I are able to control a corner of the future. Conspiring with nature, we are helping to create something of beauty and value. It is a privilege that is not confined to trees. It has enormous, wide-flung possibilities. There is no end to the things that may be accomplished by applying intelligence and will to nature. And no matter how meager the results may seem to be at any one time, the hopes for the future are worth all the anguish and torment we have to go through to keep the brush down and liberate the world.

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THREE POEMS

WALTER H. EATON

On the Recent Dead

Let us not speak yet to our friends now dead.
Let us be still a while, and leave unsaid
The phrases usual in dying times,
The round-voweled formulas and holy rhymes
Which, spoken over graves, are thought to cause
A strange suspension of the natural laws.
Think you the dead will hear us when we tell
How pleased we are that they have fought so well?
They did fight well; but what their fighting won
The fighting's end will find but just begun.
Not till the elder statesmen, gray and wise,
Investigate the winds and read the skies
And then their global congresses convene,
Shall we discover what the dead will mean.
Not until then—if even then—may we
Speak to our dead, and praise their victory.

Concert Piece

Here we have gathered in the concert hall,
Here brought our worn biographies of years
Misspent in meekly waiting for the fall
Of murmured introductions on our ears—

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At which we turned from gazing at the wall
To nod and smile or, if required, shed tears.

Here we are seated, sick and soon to die,
Strangers to joy and reason, like the age,
Unable either to accept or fly
Its dark confusion, or in mighty rage
Strike out all matter that offends the eye
And turn the story to a clearer page.

Better than battle, we believe, is rest.
So let us rest here, waiting for the flow
Of notes by which we have before been blessed;
For they will bear us upward as they go,
And we shall reach those zones of quietness
Where, till we fall, we may forget our woe.

But it is late! When will the notes begin?
How long until the cunning oboe plays
Apologies for every mortal sin?
We murmur and grow pale at these delays.
O music, come! Explain for us again
The gain and loss, and balance, of our days.

Sweeney, Rising to the Occasion

Matthew Arnold, on the beach,
Heard faith ebb swiftly past his reach.

Inland, Eliot explored
A waste of evenings, and was bored.

Both, percussing, found life hollow
Without coherent rules to follow.

Arnold hoped that love might do
A tiny cosmos built for two.

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Eliot sought chaster ease
In mystical antitheses.

But Arnold's cosmos runs its course,
To end in chaos, with divorce.

And Eliot's vision of the rose
Is drowned in interurban prose.

Sweeney, erect, would understand.
Today man legislates for man.

✪ WALTER EATON collaborated in the writing of *Democracy in Jonesville* and *The American Veteran Back Home*, and is now preparing two general works of social analysis.

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The Range of the Normal Heart Rate

PAUL D. WHITE

TO START WITH the human mammal, there is a familiar dictum that the heart rate, and therefore the pulse rate, of the normal human adult at rest should be 72 beats per minute. This is so fixed in the minds of many persons that they are unduly worried if they find on some occasion or other that their pulse rates are in the 40's or 50's, or in the 80's or 90's. For their reassurance, I state at once that I have myself found that at physical rest a person in excellent condition may have a pulse rate as low as 38 beats per minute, and another person equally fit may have a rate of 118 (under some excitement, however); this is a difference of 80 beats a minute. I shall present illustrations of this experience of mine; but before I do, I would like to add three or four other introductory remarks.

In the first place, a newborn baby has at rest a heart rate of 120 or a bit more, and this rate drops in the first few years of life more than in later years. Secondly, not only is there a considerable range in pulse rate between different individuals, but also it is true that any one person normally shows, in the course of a single day, a wide range of heart rate: when one first awakens in the morning, the heart may beat only 45 or 50 times a minute, but by midafternoon on a busy day the rate may have increased to 80 or 90. The blood pressure levels may vary normally also, though not to the same degree. Thirdly, a slow or a fast heart rate sometimes runs in certain families. And finally, the explanation for the ability of the heart to continue to beat every second or oftener, hour after hour, week after week, and year after year over a long life span lies in the fact that the rest period (diastole) for the heart muscle between beats usually exceeds the actual duration of the process of con-

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traction (systole): thus, at a heart rate of 60 per minute, the heart is active for one-third of each second and rests two-thirds of each second, which makes a workday of eight hours out of the twenty-four. At faster rates the periods of work and rest both shorten, but the latter more than the former. I shall come back to other time intervals of the heart beat later on.

Early in the Second World War, I was asked a question that deepened my interest in the range of the rate of the normal heart, a subject that had intrigued me ever since I had entered medical school: Is it possible that the heart rate of a famous mile runner could on occasion be normally below 40 per minute, as had been reported in a popular magazine? Since in some thirty years of observation I had not encountered so slow a heart rate in a healthy human being, I was inclined to answer categorically and authoritatively "no," but I decided to look a little further first, remembering the old adage "One lives and learns"—no matter what past experience may have taught one. Therefore, I wrote to the athlete in question and to a score of athletic directors and college physicians throughout the country. It was well that I did so, inasmuch as among the replies there were four that were positive. The young man in question sent me an electrocardiogram which was taken when he was in the best of health and at the height of his training; it showed a rate of 38 per minute. A two-mile champion in the Midwest had a rate of 35; a marathon winner in the environs of Boston, 38; and an outstanding aviator, 37. Thus there was clear evidence that at rest the normal human pulse rate can drop below 40. I would add three further comments about the champion miler: 1) he had difficulty at first in being accepted for military service in the Navy; 2) when he came to my office to see me in 1944, at a time when the cruiser on which he served came into Boston harbor, I found his heart rate to be 60, because, he said, of the soft life that he was leading at the time; and 3) when he returned to see me a year later, his rate was close to 40, because he was again in good physical condition as the result of permission he had received to set up on the deck of the cruiser a track over which he ran every day.

It is a recognized fact that distance runners often tend to have

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slow pulses; these as a rule have been found in the 40's and 50's. This is certainly an economy for the heart, and it may be that boys and girls in their teens who have very slow heart rates at rest may be good candidates for such track events. Moreover, the tendency to slow rates may continue through life. I well remember having this in mind on an occasion when I was examining an elderly Connecticut lawyer a few months after he had convalesced from an attack of coronary thrombosis. I found his pulse rate to be in the low 40's, which raised a suspicion of "heart block" due to the heart disease. But I asked him if by any chance he had ever done any distance running. It turned out that he had once been captain of a Yale cross-country team and had always had a slow pulse.

Lest, however, runners with average or faster pulse rates become alarmed at what I have noted above, I hasten to add that the champion miler with the very slow pulse was finally beaten by a man whose heart rate was on the average much faster. And I also think of an experience of mine years ago with some marathon runners. With official permission I presented myself on April 19, just before noon in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, at the start of the Annual Boston Marathon Race. I counted the pulse rates of the ten most likely winners (selected from newspaper accounts of their records and potentialities) and secured permission to count them again at the finish of the race. A few minutes before the gun, while the runners were standing at rest at the starting line, the pulse rates ranged widely: from 60 to 118 per minute. At the finish, some two and one-half hours later, the winner was the man whose heart rate was the fastest at the start and who ended his run of twenty-six and a fraction miles in good condition with a pulse rate of 110, 8 beats per minute less than it had been before he had run a step. Nervousness undoubtedly was responsible for his fast heart rate at rest, but had he been ruled out on the basis of physical unfitness because of that heart rate, the best man in the entire field of one-hundred-odd contestants would have been excluded.

In addition to nervousness or excitement, exercise of course normally increases the heart rate, even to figures of 200 or a bit more if the exertion is marked in degree and the person rather unfit for it. One of the advantages of physical training is that it

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helps to avoid very fast heart rates and so results in greater economy of the circulation.

One hears nowadays, even in lay literature, a good deal about the vagus (the large nerve situated in the neck and thorax that, among other functions, slows the heart rate) and sympathetic nerves as part of the involuntary or autonomic nervous system. These nerves play a very important physiological role in regulating the circulation of blood, acting in reflex from stimuli all over the body. One of their functions is to quicken the pulse rate via the sympathetic nerve action on the pacemaker of the heart located at the junction of the superior vena cava—that is, the large vein bringing blood back from the upper part of the body—and the right atrium or chamber of the heart which receives venous blood from the entire body and sends it on via the right ventricle or pumping chamber of the heart into the lungs for oxygenation. It is chiefly through the sympathetic nerve influence that excitement and exercise act to speed up the heart.

There are two other sources of sympathetic stimulation besides excitement and effort: drug action (for example, by the use of chemicals secreted by the adrenal and the thyroid glands) and the ability of rare individuals to accelerate voluntarily their heart rates. In the latter instance, the blood pressure goes up also and the pupils dilate. When I was medical resident at the Massachusetts General Hospital in 1916, there was a medical-house pupil who was one of those rare individuals, actually the fourteenth recorded in medical literature. He could, when told to do so, suddenly double his heart rate from, say, 80 to 160 or so; a few beats were needed to reach the maximal rate. This was done simply by will, with no change of any other sort. It was rather fatiguing, and Dr. F did not like to maintain the effort for as long as a minute. As a matter of fact, this mysterious mechanism proved useful on a few occasions: when he felt weak and feared that he might faint, he would then turn on this rise of pulse and blood pressure and would quickly feel better. It was conclusively proved to be a sympathetic effect, and not simply inhibition of the vagus, since the use of a large dose of atropine sulphate which completely paralyzed the vagus and raised the heart rate somewhat, to about 125, did

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not prevent an increase of rate on top of that up to 160 or more when the mechanism was put into effect.

Incidentally, at the time Dr. F was being studied, we read in medical literature that in the 1880's a Harvard medical student had been found by his professor of physiology to be one of the earliest voluntary accelerators of the heart rate ever to be recognized. No name had been given in the published article, but we decided to track him down. Some months later, Dr. P, the chief of one of the surgical services at the Massachusetts General Hospital, stopped me in the "brick corridor" and asked me if I was looking for him. It turned out that he was the medical student in question. He had not repeated his old acceleration experiment for more than thirty years, but at my request he tried it again in my laboratory, and at once his heart rate and blood pressure rose and his pupils dilated. In the thirty-five years or more that have passed since that occasion, only a few more voluntary accelerators of their heart rates have been recorded, although doubtless the capacity to do this is not so rare as this fact would suggest.

Slowing of the heart rate is achieved both by vagal stimulation and by decrease or inhibition of sympathetic tone. It happens that a very important vagal nerve plexus is located in the wall of the carotid artery in each side of the neck just below the ear. Firm pressure on the carotid at that point almost always slows the heart rate—in a few cases to such a degree that loss of consciousness may result, which in a person with a very faulty circulation can lead to serious consequences. The point at which the application of external pressure is most effective is well known to the exponents of jujitsu, who utilize this mechanism on occasion to knock out their opponents. In rare persons, the carotid sinus is so sensitive that even a tight collar is too much for them and they may faint, as in the famous case of a minister who collapsed during several sermons while wearing a high clerical collar. An antidote for this so-called carotid sinus syndrome is atropine, derived from the plant belladonna. The use of large doses of this drug will raise the heart rate to a moderate degree, as in the test noted above in the voluntary accelerator, but never to the degree effected by full sympathetic stimulation. Incidentally, no person has yet been discovered

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who can voluntarily, with no other action (as by holding his breath), *slow* his heart rate.

So much in brief for the heart rate of man, who is a mammal more or less intermediate in size between the mouse and the whale. Knowledge concerning the heart rates of other mammals varies tremendously, from the many details analyzed for a century or more in the case of the experimental animals—such as mice, rats, guinea pigs, cats and dogs—to the little that is known about the larger mammals, most of which are wild. To be sure, horses, cattle, and even elephants when domesticated have been studied, particularly when ill; their heart rates are known, but electrocardiograms are not often taken. Suffice it to say that in other mammals, as in man, the heart rate varies according to the balance of nerve reflexes acting on the autonomic nervous system, the conflict perpetually in progress between the vagus and the sympathetic. In some animals—for example, the dog—the heart rate varies much more than in man in this way; a condition called sinus arrhythmia, a more or less normal waxing and waning of rate, especially increased with deep breathing, is common in all mammals but can be particularly appreciated in the dog when one holds the palm of one's hand over the chest where the heart thumps against it. In the case of mammals living much of the time under water, such as the seal, there is a striking slowing of the heart beat as the result of the vagal reflex of diving and submergence. This is a means of conserving oxygen and allowing longer stays under water, aided by other circulatory devices for storing oxygenated blood in the case of the aquatic mammals. It doubtless accounts for some of the extreme bradycardia (slow heart rate) that we found in the case of the small beluga whale. Even man shows some of this reflex effect when he is under water.

The most striking relationship in mammalian heart rate is, however, that with heart size. The accompanying table illustrates this very well. The smaller the mammal, of course, the smaller the heart and the faster the heart rate. This is complicated in the case of the aquatic mammals by the strong vagal effect of immersion, notably illustrated in the following table by the very slow heart

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rate of the beluga white whale, whose heart is actually smaller than that of the elephant, which has a faster heart rate.

Mammal	*Heart rate*	*P-R interval*	*QRS duration*
Mouse	620-780	0.03—0.04 sec.	0.008—0.011 sec.
Human infant (newborn)	120-140	0.08—0.12 "	0.04 —0.06 "
Human adult	50-90 (av. 72)	0.14—0.21 "	0.07 —0.11 "
Elephant	24-53 (av. 35)	0.28—0.41 "	0.12 —0.18 "
Beluga (small white whale)	12-23 (av. 16)	? 0.3	0.12

It will be noted that the table includes not only heart rate but also certain time intervals of the electrocardiogram which increase steadily with heart size in inverse ratio to the heart rate; that is, the larger the heart, the slower the pulse and the longer it takes the electrical waves of the heart beat to travel through the heart. The first of the two specific time intervals recorded is that called *P-R*, which denotes the length of time it takes for the electrical impulse to travel from the pacemaker at the base of the heart (the sinoatrial node) to the node and bundle of specialized (a-v) conducting tissue at the beginning of the two ventricles which pump blood simultaneously into the lung circulation and into the blood vessels supplying the rest of the body. The other time interval, called *QRS*, is that of the speed of travel of this same electrical impulse on down from the a-v node and bundle into the ventricular muscle.

The heart rates shown in the table were all accurately measured from electrocardiograms which were easily obtained by suitable electrodes, except in the case of the whale. For the first time, an electrocardiogram of a whale was obtained in Alaskan waters with harpoon electrodes by Dr. Robert King of Seattle, Mr. James Jenks of Cambridge, and the writer of the present article in August, 1952. The record was made as a dorsal lead while we were being pulled along rapidly in a skiff by the beluga whale, whose sympathetic nerve stimulation from the excitement of the chase was more than counterbalanced by the pulse-slowing of immersion. (A dorsal lead is the connection made between two electrodes placed at varying distances along the back of the subject and the galvanometer that records the electrocardiogram. Usually electrocardio-

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graphic leads are routinely taken by connecting the arms and legs or the precordium overlying the heart with the galvanometer.) It is hoped eventually to obtain an electrocardiogram from a really big whale, such as the gray whale to be found off the California coast. The beluga record was made as an initial test for the development of technique.

Finally, it may be added that the heart rates of very small birds, such as the canary and humming bird, have been recorded by microphone to be in the neighborhood of 1,000 beats per minute in contrast to those of cold-blooded animals—such as reptiles, amphibia and fish—which range from 10 to 60. (For example, the tortoise, 10 to 20; the crocodile, 22 to 47; the frog, 30; the cod, 26 to 40; and the eel, 40 to 60.) The heart rates of hibernating animals have been found to be very low, sometimes only a very few beats per minute.

In summary then, I have pointed out that the rate of the normal heart beat of mammals varies greatly—not only between different species, but also between different individuals of the same species, with special reference to man, and indeed even in the same individual at different times of the day. There are several known factors which influence the rate, chief of which are heart size and autonomic nervous impulses, sympathetic and vagal. The time intervals of the individual beat also vary with heart size and nervous stimuli. The larger the heart and the more predominant the vagal tone, the slower as a rule the pulse rate and the longer the time intervals of the beat; the smaller the heart and the greater the sympathetic nerve tone, the faster the beat and the shorter the time intervals. Birds have, relative to size, a faster heart rate than mammals, while cold-blooded vertebrates (reptiles, amphibians and fish) have a slower rate.

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The Life and Death of Words

DWIGHT L. BOLINGER

A MAJOR REVOLUTION now looms in the science of words, not known in all its significance even to some linguistic scientists. Its prime movers and pacesetters, working independently but convergingly, are Professor Yakov Malkiel of the University of California and the school of linguists in Germany known as the Neo-Humboldtians, after the great nineteenth-century naturalist Baron von Humboldt, pioneer in geology, terrestrial magnetism, botany and anthropology, in addition to the study of languages.

Malkiel is the meticulous, profound researcher. His work is in Spanish and related languages, but his method is valid for all languages and will be applied to them sooner or later. The Neo-Humboldtians are the avant-garde theorizers, shorter on demonstration but bolder in drawing conclusions. No one who ventures to pronounce on how words and meanings evolve will in the future dare to overlook their work, for it gives at last a ground for the fusion of the time-honored study of how languages change in form and the newer science of semantics.

Briefly, the implication that concerns us is that words evolve in masses of forms and meanings with infinite cross- and counter-influences, like soft bodies that crowd together and modify one another's shape and function. Linguists have always known that words behave in some such fashion, but they have not had the courage to depart from their straight-line etymologies, mainly because they lacked the vast information that Malkiel has amassed to prove that no form or meaning in a language ever changes in isolation. As Jost Trier of the Neo-Humboldtian school says, "Nothing in language exists independently."

Straight-line etymologizing, the hunting down of "the" source of

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a word, cannot be displaced so long as there are words whose prime source is unknown. It gives us the ontogeny of words—their individual parentage—against what the new approach offers, an understanding of their phylogeny, their group survival, the history of the entire species. A recent example of the straight-line quest, brilliant as a display of tenacious searching, was the discovery by Professor Allen Walker Read of Columbia University—wading through the Greek *óla kalá*, the Choctaw *okeh*, the Andrew Jackson *Oll Korrect*, and other origins proposed by the indefatigable guess-workers who plague the borders of etymology—that *O.K.* comes from the Martin Van Buren O. K. Club of 1840. But what the new school wants to know is why *O.K.* caught on, and why it has grown in popularity every year until within the last decade or two it has partially displaced *all right*. Not all of the answer lies in the language necessarily, any more than all that explains the popularity of a style in women's clothing is to be found in the history of styles—some of it may be the appeal of sheer newness or nonconformity, or persistent plugging by an advertiser. But as much as the life or death of a term or meaning is due to its relationships among its own kind, linguistics provides an answer; and that is a lot.

An example of Professor Malkiel's methods is the Spanish *pech-*, a root that developed from several Latin sources: *pactu*, 'agreement' (including terms of agreement, fines, taxes); *pectus*, 'breast, chest'; *pessulu*, 'bolt or bar of a door'; and the group represented by *despectus*, 'contempt,' and *suspectus*, 'suspicion.' Not all of these left descendants in all parts of Spain, but as speakers migrated from one section to another, the forms tied themselves into what Malkiel terms a "lexical tangle," with each wielding some influence to support or weaken each of the others. For instance, the *despechar* from *pactu* meaning 'to levy excessive taxes on,' hence 'to ruin,' merged with the *despechar* from *despectus* meaning 'to offend,' which had already been infused with *pecho* from *pectus*, 'breast,' as the seat of the feelings, so that *despechar* covered the range of ruin, anger and despondency. A less complicated tangle in English is that of *shoot* and *chute*. The words of a language form a gravitational system, with some forms being pulled into the orbit of others

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and some rotating at a safe distance in a sort of mutual tolerance and stability.

This is all in a manner of speaking, of course. Words are not things, but activities. Language is a system of movements like figure dancing—but the most complicated system under human control. If two similar steps in a dance can condition each other so that both are confused or so that the dancer must exercise special care to keep them apart, imagine what happens when the steps are increased from the possible hundred or two in the dance to the eight or ten thousand that constitute the stock of verbal movements at a speaker's command. Imbed these ten thousand movements in a layer of ten thousand meanings, and it becomes obvious that something is going to be done to align meaning with form, purely for economy of effort.

Here is the most important inference to be drawn from our knowledge of word-families: that the life and death of words in large part depends on our need to economize, to make what words really mean agree with what they seem to mean. There is a connectedness in our experience of reality—dogs are dogs, but they also have four legs and so relate to cats; they eat almost anything, and so belong with other carnivores. Unflaggingly, but not always successfully, we seek the same connectedness in the imaging of reality, our language.

To picture the word within the system of which it forms a part, imagine an orb like the sun with gaseous satellites revolving about it. The central body is the core of the word's meaning, what it is taken to signify under normal conditions by those who hear and use it. The gasiform satellites are the aura of all its apparent meanings. When the core is relatively hard, the aura continues to haunt the fringes but does not move in upon the central meaning. When the core is diffuse, the aura may blend with it and alter it completely. The aura is like an accumulation of cosmic dust given off by all the other orbs in the galaxy of the language with which the one in question is associated in meaning or use. As our word drifts its way about the verbal universe in the daily converse and intercourse of speech, it accumulates this billowy sort of envelope that

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presses in upon it hard or softly, depending on circumstances.

Our astrological picture is necessary to get the facts in focus. The essential fact is that every word or combination of words lays the stamp of its form on the meaning that it conveys. Once we say *onion* and associate it with a certain adjunct to culinary art, *onion* is available to come to mind whenever anything that sounds like *onion,* in either form or meaning, is mentioned. In form, it may be a rhyming word like *bunion*; in meaning, it may be a kindred term like *soup.* (Meaning is ultimately form, for it comes by way of the actual use together of *onion* and *soup.*) Until the connection is unusually close, no threat is posed to the stability of the word. Once the bond is firmly set, a reaction begins to take place.

Disinterested will serve as an example. This word is a kind of binary star, one-half being the prefix *dis-* and the other half the base *interested.* Its stuff is pretty thin, like that of which astronomers tell us a roomful would weigh only a fraction of a gram, for it names not a precise thing but an attitude—in a nutshell, you cannot diagram or picture *disinterested.* So the aura begins to mingle with it. Its first half, *dis-,* takes on the coloration of almost all the *dis-* words in spoken English, which is that of an "unfavorable" meaning (*disgust, distrust, dislike, disturb, distress, dissatisfy*), while its second half pulls in upon itself the only popular meaning of *interested* nowadays, which is not 'having a stake in something' but 'being emotionally attracted by something.' There you have it—*disinterested* not in the sense of 'impartial,' but as an unfavorable term signifying 'indifferent': the disinterested judge, to quote Jacques Barzun, becomes the judge who goes to sleep on the bench. What *disinterested* "really" means has moved toward what it seems to mean.

All the evidence of the power of what we might call the "organon" of the language—its vocabulary in action, with form engraved on meaning—has been at hand, but not until now has it received more than piecemeal recognition. Some of the pieces wear traditional labels in linguistics.

There is, first, folk etymology. One may occasionally hear a plant or animal referred to as *high bred,* in place of *hybrid*—an ob-

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vious, though false, inference based on the achievements of modern genetics. Folk etymology is the interpretation of something strange in familiar terms—the odd word is taken really to mean what it seems to mean. The American political expression *dough-face* originally meant a face covered with a mask of dough; then, when the practice of wearing such masks disappeared and the original meaning was lost, people began to apply the term with 'easily molded person' in mind. Probably everyone remembers childhood guesses that later had to be revised—one of mine was *juice harp* for *jew's harp*.

Then there is "verbal taboo." Here the speaker knows what his term signifies, but the aura includes an apparent meaning that is indecorous, and so he refrains from using it. In Perry County, Tennessee, the word *peanut*, writes Kelsie Harder, "contains a double-barrelled taboo, and red-faced farm boys, or even their parents, seldom used the term among mixed company." The word *goober* replaced it, but trouble cropped up again because "*goober* had formerly been identified with the anatomically distinctive organ of young boys." The not entirely satisfactory *peas* was the compromise. The linguistic geographer Raven McDavid tells of the taboo on *Helena*, Montana, with accent on the first syllable, aggravated perhaps by little boys who disguised their profanity in *Go to Helena*. (In my set it was the supremely fumigated *Go to Halifax*.)

"Conflict of homonyms" is the collision between two words which sound alike and, owing to use in similar situations, cause such confusion (or, if one is tabooed, embarrassment) that one eventually disappears or changes its meaning. Professor Edna Williams of Smith College has documented the rivalry between *queen* and *quean*, 'harlot,' where *quean* was finally exiled from standard English; that of *strait* and *straight*, where *strait* has disappeared in all but a few phrases, such as *the strait and narrow path*.

"Blends" are compromises, usually accidental, between two forms, both of which fit a situation—the meaning wears a dual stamp. When Erle Stanley Gardner writes, "Many the night we have paced the floor," he combines *many a night* with *many's the night*. The student who claims to be "listening intentively" has

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joined *attentively* and *intently*. Others are "imitray" for *imitate* and *portray* (Red Skelton), "tremorous" for *tremulous* and *timorous* (Hart Crane), "sophomoronic" (Francis Hayes), "bugabear" for *bugaboo* and *bugbear*. Usually a blend is a nova in the verbal heavens that flashes and then fades. But now and then one continues to glow. The common *every now and then* is probably a blend of *now and then* with *ever and anon*. Many speakers contradict themselves when they use "He isn't far from wrong," blending "He isn't far wrong" and "He's far from wrong." Blends require not only meanings that will match, but forms that mate easily: *most places* + *almost everywhere* = *most everywhere*.

Given a long enough stretch of history, even the few blends that survive can accumulate a respectable total. And here we reach the most spectacular proof of the workings of the organon of words, entire families built by slow accretion through the centuries in a process more subtle than blending but closely similar to it. The thirteen-year-old boy who said, "Jones is *plumpier* than Smith" remolded *plump* along the lines of *chunky, chubby, roly-poly, tubby, pursy, paunchy, pudgy, portly* and *fleshy*, re-creating a form as old as Shakespeare. Here the aura is one of form: about *plump* hover all its synonyms, and they have borne in upon it and changed its shape to agree with them. Instead of a change of meaning to make the word really mean what it seems to mean, there is a change of form to make the word seem to mean what it really means—two sides of a single process, the mutual fitness of form and meaning.

Thus constellations of words have been born. The Danish linguist Otto Jespersen noted the grouping of *rump, clump, dump, stump, hump, bump, lump* and other *-ump* words about the notion of heaviness, roundness and clumsiness. The family of *slap, clap, rap, tap, flap* and *lap* denotes actions that strike and then glide off, while that of *dab, grab, stab, tab, nab* and *daub* covers striking that does not glide off but stops in or on something. A lighter or sharper blow or its result is suggested by the group *nip, clip, tip, sip, dip, grip, pip, quip, yip* (contrast *yap*), *flip* (contrast *flop*) and *drip* (contrast *droop* and *drop*). But another constellation crosses this one at

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the point of *drip*, that of *drip, drop, drizzle, drench, drool, dribble, drink, drain,* relating to liquids.

After *shivaree* first appeared in English about 1800, it had to make its way against several other expressions with the same meaning: *horning, belling, skimmilton, bull-band.* It triumphed because arrayed behind it was the family of accented *-ee* words: *jubilee, husking bee, spree, whee, gee, free, yippee, glee, jamboree, corroboree.* It is easy to prove the linguistic reality of such families. A group of thirty-four persons, asked whether *maskeró* or *maskerée* better expressed the idea of 'a noisy, riotous masquerade party,' voted six to one in favor of *maskerée* because, said one, "it seemed so much gayer." The British linguist J. R. Firth calls these sound-sense groupings "phonesthemes."

Some families were undoubtedly imitative in origin. *Bang, clang, clatter, batter, spatter* imitate sounds. Other families have no trace of imitativeness. Roughly half of the popular words in English that begin with *gl-* (*glimpse, glow, glare, glitter, glance*), for example, have to do with something visual. Whatever their origin, they now serve as gravitational centers, growing as they overpower other centers or fading as they are overpowered by them.

Members of a constellation may be few or many, from mere pairs like *banish-vanish* (with looser ties with *finish, anguish*), *abysmal-dismal* (ignorance), *damning-damaging* (evidence) to multitudes that cluster in all degrees of affinity and branch out in a score of directions. All point to the one inevitable drift—the accommodation of form to meaning and meaning to form.

What is the effect of the organon of language, of the aura of meanings that cling to a form and of forms that cling to a meaning? Words are born—how, we can never predict: they may be deliberately coined, like *aspirin* or *gas,* or adapted, like *gatling* or *bowie*; they may be borrowed from another language, like *buckaroo* or *flair,* or from another dialect, like *ornery* based on *ordinary* or *heist* based on *hoist*; they may come from having an extra word lying around somewhere that is not really needed, which gradually becomes infused with a special meaning—"Whip him *good*" no longer means the same as "Whip him *well.*" By fusions of misun-

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derstanding or borrowing, a single word may propagate several—*gentle, gentile, genteel, genty* and *jaunty* are all ultimately the same. Easy as it seems to do, words are seldom invented—they usually just happen. If they fulfill a need, they are seized upon and made secure in the language. If not, they are lost. What is important in the life of a word is that once launched it has to run the gantlet of all the existing forms and meanings in the organon.

The result may be fortune or disaster, a straightforward course or distortion or oblivion. Of the immediate failures no record is left, but we may be sure that mortality far exceeds survival, as witness the accidental blends already mentioned which died aborning. Our interest lies with the successes, with how they have managed to endure the ordeal of a hostile environment.

Like people, these words achieve success by adaptation. Of all the terms of electrical measurement named after men famous in electronics—*ohm, joule, ampere, coulomb, volt*—only *volt* has taken hold outside the lingo of specialists and become a part of everyone's speaking vocabulary; *volt* could readily adapt itself because *bolt* and *jolt,* also used in popular reference to electricity, were there to help. *Catty,* as in "a catty remark," at the outset had no more promise of success than *waspish, shrewish* or *vixenish,* also named for animals, and besides had to brave their competition; but it is now better known than any of the others to the speaker on the street, thanks to *cutting, curt* and *sarcastic. Magnolia,* named for Pierre Magnol, was so suggestive of glorifying words like *magnificent, magnanimous* that it not only caught on but gave rise to *magnolious.* Such as these are the rousing successes.

The course of others has been more tortuous. *Flibbertigibbet* originally meant a fiend, but the pull of the family of *flippant, flighty, flimsy, flirt, flit, fly-by-night* and other words signifying something light, harebrained or inconsequential has been too powerful, and now it means a flighty person.

Still others have been struck a fatal blow, some early in their career and some late, by an enemy elsewhere in the organon. An enlightened society will no longer tolerate *niggardly,* though it has nothing to do with *nigger.* As soon as the ending *-ific* became associated, through *terrific, horrific* and *prolific,* with the idea of

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drive and power, *pacific,* 'peaceful,' was doomed in the spoken language. Association turns purely relative elements like *-ific* and *dis-* into absolute ones and destroys or changes words where they do not appear in the dominant sense.

One way of avoiding this fate is a change of form—usually just enough of a change of pronunciation to disguise the unwanted kinship. *Fatima* is still listed by the dictionaries with accent on *fat-*, but few speakers will tolerate so unfeminine a pronunciation. *Communal* is traditionally accented on the first syllable, but political sensitivity (plus the growing use of the word *community*) has pushed the accent to the second syllable for many speakers. The pronunciation of *nascent* with the *a* of *pass* was too reminiscent of *nasty,* with the result that the *a* of *nay* is now recorded.

The chooser or inventor of a word must grope his way in the organon of language exactly as a composer in search of an apt musical phrase gropes his way in the organon of music. There are no clearly formulated rules; success is determined by fitness.

Fishing in the subconscious, when we are coining or choosing, brings to light the wayward associations that attach themselves like lily pads and old shoes to the hook, along with an occasional catch. Dr. Willis Whitney of the General Research Laboratory wrote of trying to recapture the name of Senator Kilgore. Before laying it by the heels, he had dredged up the German *Blutgut,* the Latinized *Carney,* and the Anglicized *Gormley.* Trying to think of a word similar to *carotid,* which I finally grasped as *caryatid,* I thought of a bug, and realized afterward that I had been sidetracked by *katydid.* The interacting bonds of form and meaning can summon any related form for a related meaning and any related meaning for a related form, as well as summon form by form and meaning by meaning. One comes to understand von Humboldt when he says, as Professor Harold Basilius of Wayne University expounds him, "Words result from the totality of speech." There is no more real invention in *temptatious,* combining *temptation* and related forms with *delicious, luscious, scrumptious* and other *-cious* words, than in saying "Quigley fiddles," though neither may ever have been said before.

To give all possible examples of these and other manifestations

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of the organon would be to quote the dictionary, for all show potentially an infusion by the aura of form and meaning. The tendency of forms to mold themselves on other forms with like meanings, and meanings to mold themselves on other meanings conveyed by like forms, is universal.

But here arises a dilemma. Why has this not completely regularized the English language, so that now the conformity of the two is perfect? Partly, there has not been time. Partly, the accidental origin of new words precludes their being regular to begin with, which is a corollary of the same thing. Most importantly of all, we resist it.

What speakers avoid doing is as important as what they do. Self-correction of speech and writing, and the correction of others in conversation ("I can't understand what you say"), in classrooms and over editorial desks is an unending business, one that determines the outlines of our speech just as acceptances determine its mass. Correction, the border beyond which we say "no" to an expression, is to language what a seacoast is to a map. Up to now, linguistic scientists have ignored it because they could see in it nothing more than the hankerings of pedants after a standard that is arbitrary, prejudiced and personal. But it goes deeper. Its motive is intelligibility, and in spite of the occasional aberrations that have distracted investigators from the central facts, it is systematic enough to be scientifically described.

Correction is largely the process of throwing an expression into sharper relief. It works automatically in some instances of pronunciation. We can say, "Industry is working for de*fense*" and put the accent on one syllable, but in "A good offense is the best *de*fense" we shift it to the other, for the sake of contrast.

Another example is our exasperation when we start a sentence and then find that somewhere along its course we have used two identical or closely similar sounds in different senses: "I'll take the doors outdoors to paint them"; "He charged me too much for charging the battery"; "It is good to be in a position to be in possession of the facts"; "It's an oasis in the wastes of Africa"; "The second weakness is one that he does not to my knowledge acknowledge." A colleague at a committee meeting said, "Yes, merit

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increases—I think the idea has merit," then paused, laughed and corrected herself. "Before you leave, be sure to brush your hair" is all right, and so is "Before you leave, be sure to brush your teeth," but "Before you leave, be sure to brush your hair and teeth" would be rejected in favor of "brush your hair and clean your teeth"; for the implied repetition would use the same word in different senses.

What one linguist belittles as "the school admonition to use synonyms instead of repeating a word" is the basic need to achieve clarity through contrast carried to an extreme. Purists have made a fetish of not permitting repetition even in the same sense. But this is unimportant. What matters is that in order to be understood, meanings that we want to distinguish we must represent by clearly distinguishable sounds. The purists are right, but for the wrong reason: we do not avoid repeating because it sounds bad, but it sounds bad because we avoid it—the prime reason for the avoidance is the prompting of contrast.

So, except in the most unreflecting speech, we are likely to shun "He had an idea, and jumped up and wrote it down," where, even though there is no repetition of sound, *up* and *down* are incongruously matched.

The reason we fail to realize the contrastive impulse in language is that we are seldom aware of its functioning except when it breaks down. The crude examples that I have given illustrate a few of the commoner disorders.

The drive for contrast goes counter to the drift toward similarity. Here is the explanation of why a language will tolerate a multiplicity of words for the same thing—why masses of synonyms have grown up and works like Roget's *Thesaurus* are possible. If the aura had its way, all synonyms would sound alike; but we know that they do not. The reason is that meaning is nebulous and has to be condensed by the context in which a word is used. The way we resolve that condensation responds to the need for contrast. Two expressions otherwise synonymous may be resolved in different ways. Let us say that I express an idea as "I was running for the train because my watch was not running and I was late." Here, within a narrow context, *running* has been condensed in two

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ways; the result is nonsensical or funny (funniness is a social reaction to nonsense). So I reach for an expression completely different in form, but synonymous ("my watch was out of order," "needed fixing," "wasn't working"), which condenses the meaning contrastively. If all synonyms sounded alike, either clarity or brevity would have to be sacrificed.

If our language had a large enough inventory of sounds, we might retain both similarity and contrast to the full—have a set of synonyms of similar form, and a stand-by set to be called in when needed. But the stock of distinctive sounds ("phonemes") is too small, and when sharp contrast is needed, we have to use them up more than one at a time. *Tiny* and *tidy* are not bothersome in referring to a small woman's figure, but if *a tidy sum* is likely to be misunderstood as *a tiny sum*, just the contrast of *d* and *n* is not enough—the speaker must clutch at something entirely different, such as *respectable, large* or *sizable*. Competition keeps similarity and contrast moving in upon each other all the time.

The fight between the purist and his linguist foe is not part of our immediate business, but the theme of drift and contrast holds a moral that it would be inopportune not to point out.

A language might be likened to a machine with two economies: the economy of social effort, which is that of maintaining existing contrasts and keeping the machine in repair; and the economy of individual effort, which is that of letting it float into a homogeneous state of bliss that will tax the speaker least when he tries to remember what he wants to say. As speakers, regularity is what makes us happiest, and our children are working hard at it every day with their self-created as well as propagated *I doed it, you was, a orange*.

But speakers are also hearers, which makes the division a false one. From the hearer's standpoint—which is the same as saying from the social standpoint—the trouble is that there are many children and many points of departure for regularization which may therefore run at cross-purposes. Language is a sensitive and infinitely layered and segmented machine, and its owners cannot afford to let new parts be inserted or old ones moved from one place to another unless they represent a minimum of disagreement. There are vested interests even in the absurdities.

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The purist and the anti-purist maintain this false division, the one championing society as the stockholder in stability and the other the individual as the focus of change.

The purist takes a short view of history, refusing to see that languages are always on the move. His mistake is his unhappy penchant for defending positions that the majority have long since willingly abandoned. He will fight for a senseless *whom* as fiercely as for a sensible distinction between *mitigate* and *militate* or *foreboding* and *forbidding*. Like the prohibitionist, he makes a moral issue of a certain kind of abstinence.

The anti-purist sees the massive changes that language has undergone through the ages, and watches with contempt the handful of pipsqueaks in his own generation who would try to arrest an irresistible process. To him, Speakers are the great flowing stream, which he emotionally identifies with Nature, and purists are a small hive of busybodies outside Nature trying vainly to divert it. In his Olympian view he overlooks our immediate concerns and fails to see the purist as but one part of the assertion of things-as-they-are reflected in language, revealed in other ways in the hour-by-hour hesitations and self-corrections on the part of speakers—their "I mean this, not that," the "What was that you said?" on the part of hearers, their insistence on some alternative mode of expression, the frowning-down of rude intonations and laughing-out of oddities, the life-or-death substitution of *flammable* for *inflammable*, the constant and inescapable decisions that one must make on how to put a thought more clearly or pronounce, for the benefit of a stupid or noisy audience, a word more intelligibly. Interference with language is inescapable. The individual interferes, automatically, when he forgets or fumbles or is careless or lazy; society bent on self-preservation interferes whenever he strays, and drives him back into line—almost—the extra amount beyond the almost being the quantum of change.

Society hugs its practices to itself, and the purist hugs them too close; but anti-purists are as powerless to prevent the embrace as purists are to make themselves immortal. Both the long and short views are true in their proper setting. To side with drift against contrast is to side with the nether against the upper millstone.

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Old Song

LINCOLN FITZELL

When beauty fallen out of speech,
Gives tongue to silence and sun-reach,
Then find a warm place by the wall,
And deep in shady summer sprawl.

Now, dust sings in its multitudes,
Far fragrance powders in the woods,
And sunlight like a walking-beam
Strikes fence and church and spills its gleam.

Not fish nor insect, beast nor bird,
Obtain the light within the word,
And man is dark till charmed and still,
He mirrors the immortal will.

What sudden breeze strews on the lawn
Scent of a rose, eternal dawn?
O, now has language golden eyes . . .
The peacock screams in paradise.

✪ LINCOLN FITZELL, recipient of the 1937 Shelley Memorial Award, will publish his fourth volume of poems this year. His work has appeared in literary magazines of this country and England.

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The Making of a "Communist"

BRADFORD SMITH

THIS IS A STORY no American should have to write.

During the war years, when my wife and I used to think about what we would like to have happen to us after the fighting was over, we agreed that we wanted to return to New England and settle down in the country, where we could grow some of our own food, send our son to public school, take part in community activities, and balance the budget with writing instead of with college teaching and writing combined. Although we were lucky enough to be separated for only a year and a half by wartime activity, we most of all wanted the opportunity to do things together—everything from gardening and hiking to reading, music, research work, and helping out at the local PTA, scout troop, or whatever came along. We were tired of moving every few years. I was tired of wartime stress and responsibility. We wanted a place of our own. We wanted roots.

The only remarkable thing about this common dream was that in our case it came true. We found a place in the country that had everything we wanted—privacy with accessibility, a view and a swimming pond, proximity to good libraries and old friends, a satisfactory school, a modest but potentially charming old house. None of the catastrophes conventionally supposed to happen to new country dwellers happened to us. The house was sound and in need of no more than ordinary repairs and renewals. A series of interesting writing jobs gave me more than enough to do and as much as we needed to balance the budget.

We'd been told that our neighbors would be slow to warm up to us. A New Englander myself, though not country-born, I felt

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that I knew how to get along with people whose folkways I had inherited with three hundred years of New England ancestry. My wife, having grown up on a farm, was immune to the frictions and disappointments which often show up when city-born women move to the country and find it different from what they have imagined. Our dream turned into reality with almost frightening success.

The neighbors were friendly; it almost seemed as if they had been waiting for us to arrive. We had made up our minds to spend five or ten years doing what we were asked to do but making no effort to hurry things. Then, we thought, the community might come to accept us, at least as fully as "outsiders" can ever be taken in.

Our modest plan was shattered by irresistible pressure from without. First of all, our son was elected president of his high-school class a few weeks after school had opened. My wife was elected president of the PTA. No such lofty propositions came my way, but I was invited here and there as a speaker, became a scoutmaster, was elected to the town Republican committee, and took on the job of directing a state-wide circuit of forums on public affairs.

We were puzzled but delighted by this sudden acceptance. We found that, far from being stand-offish, our neighbors were more than eager to draw us into the community. We stayed out of the organizations that were purely social, for we had to conserve our time; and it was the creative, constructive activities that attracted our interest.

This capstone of acceptance by the community completed our happiness. We were living where we wanted to and as we wanted to. We had the privacy and independence we wanted; and more, we felt ourselves bound into the community, united in the warm comradeship of people who know each other well and whose loves and labors include not only their personal and family affairs, but the common interests of the whole group. This, to us, is a necessary part of the good life.

Since we found this acceptance so quickly, our shock was all the greater when friends from a distance called to see us one day. They had stopped at a store six or seven miles down the road to ask the way. The store was primarily for tourists, so we didn't know the owner.

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"What do you think he said when we asked him if he knew Bradford Smith?" our friends wanted to know. "He said, 'You mean that Communist?' "

Our friends thought it a great joke. We didn't think it very funny, but we laughed too. Just at this time Westbrook Pegler was discovering that our state was full of Communists—most of them writers and artists, of course—so we attributed the shopkeeper's reaction to this much-publicized hogwash.

But a few days later a friend from a near-by college stopped to ask if we would sign a petition being circulated by the Progressive party. We said no, that we were not in sympathy with the Progressive party and didn't want to be identified with it.

"That's very funny," he said. "When I tried to get my filling station man to sign it just now, he said, 'I wouldn't sign anything that Bradford Smith was in.' "

A few days later, friends from a neighboring town asked us over for cocktails, saying that they wanted us to meet Mr. X. When we got there, we learned that Mr. X would not be present. "He said he was afraid your ideas would be too radical for him," they told us with a laugh.

Radical? Both my wife and I had been reared in ordinary, comfortable middle-class homes. We were property owners and stockholders, our security dependent on the American economic system. I had spent my life promoting the democratic way and had even received a high award for my work from the hands of General Eisenhower. Neither of us had so much as gone in for the campus type of radicalism common among college students. In fact, I had not even taken an interest in party politics before the war, though residence abroad had given me an interest in international matters which had ultimately aroused a political consciousness. As a member of several college faculties, I had had a reputation for political conservatism, and had been made fun of for such things as opposing the organization of strikes and believing that liberal Republicanism is a practical possibility.

Embarrassed that our hosts had lost a guest because of us, I said something about his peculiar behavior.

"Oh, lots of people around here think you're a Communist," they said, still laughing.

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Only we weren't laughing any more. When we got home we tried to figure out how such a rumor had got started, but we couldn't. There wasn't a single fact to go on—not an act or a word written or spoken that could ever have given any sane person the notion that we had even the slightest sympathy with Marxism. As early as 1938 I had pointed out, in print, that communism and fascism led down different roads to the same tyranny.

It was obvious now that we were surrounded by a wide ring of suspicion of which we had been totally unaware, and that we were regarded as a source of contamination. This was not a pleasant feeling, even though we knew that our real friends and our close neighbors were not taken in. Yet it was evident that a good many people who should have known better were willing to believe the worst.

By prodding some of our closest friends, we gradually learned the rumors being circulated:

I must be a Communist because I had no visible means of support. My means of support were visible enough to anyone who read the *Saturday Evening Post* (scarcely to be compared with the *Daily Worker*), the *Reader's Digest*, the *Herald Tribune*, and, in fact, a number of papers throughout the country which were printing a cartoon treatment of American history for which I wrote the continuity.

I must be a Communist because in several public speeches I had criticized the government for its evacuation of American citizens of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. This criticism had of course also been made in *Harper's* and other non-Communist magazines.

I must be a Communist because my wife had become president of the PTA, and boring from within is a Communist tactic.

I must be a Communist because I was going around the state (as a forum director) stirring up controversies about such things as socialized medicine and racial equality.

I must be a Communist because I was being investigated by the FBI. The investigation, I learned later, was undertaken because a government agency was about to invite me to take on a confidential job.

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But how would such rumors start?

Well, there was a reason. A large group of old-time residents of our town had formed a citizens' committee to clean up abuses or inefficiencies in town government. I was one of many invited to sit in. I had not agreed with some of the drastic methods the group had used to call attention to what it regarded as wrong, but my caution had been overruled. Yet now I, the outsider, had been selected as a convenient means through which to attack the group as a whole. It was better politics to attack me than any of the rest, whose aunts and uncles and cousins represented a large proportion of the town's voters. It was also good politics to arouse hatred against a single individual, since such an emotion is highly negotiable. It's pretty hard to get people to hate anything so abstract as a committee.

So I was the scapegoat. That explanation made us feel a little better. But it didn't make us like the widely circulated falsehoods or, still worse, the apparent readiness with which people who knew us only by reputation were willing to believe and pass on the assertion that I was a Communist. If I had been a self-employed shoemaker instead of a self-employed writer, they would probably not have fallen such ready victims to rumor, though why men who earn a living with their minds are expected to be more vulnerable to intellectual frauds like communism, I have never understood.

The antics of Joe McCarthy in Washington just at this time turned out to be a great boon to the rumormongers. McCarthy attacked the wartime agency in which I had served, and managed to leave the impression that everyone who had worked for it was a Red. The subsequent dragging into the McCarthy investigation of all the country's best experts on the Far East, most of them personal friends, did not help any.

Then, with the reality of a nightmare, came news that in New York publishing circles I was rumored to be a Communist.

For the local situation we had a local explanation, but this was both startling and inexplicable. At last we found one possible clue. Back in 1936 when, as a resident of Japan, I had published my first novel, a friend had written to recommend a New York literary agent if I needed one. I took the recommendation, had dealt with the agent

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for ten years until a suggestion of his that I rewrite an article along what I regarded as Communist lines had caused me to break the relationship. It had never occurred to me that he was a real Communist (I had never, so far as I knew, met one) until, looking over the proofs of a forthcoming book, I read the assertion that he had been a Party member.

It was also true that just after the outbreak of the war he had placed two articles of mine in *Amerasia*—a publication I had never heard of till then but which subsequently became notorious.

This was the full "proof" of my radicalism. I had witnessed the making of a "Communist" in the most painful way possible, and it was small comfort to realize that what had happened to me was happening to thousands all over America.

What does it do to a man to find himself surrounded by suspicion, to know that though loyal and sensible friends will dismiss such idle rumormongering, the majority will conclude that where there is smoke there must be fire, that therefore he must be, at least partly, what rumor says?

I have no more than average courage. I'm scared. I dare not speak freely any more. I know that everything I say will be searched for signs of communism. I think twice before making a statement even on a non-political matter. I am afraid to defend the right of labor to organize, or to attack the hateful excesses of American advertising, or to stand up for progressive ideas in education. When I meet a friend on the street or talk with one at the Service Club lunch, I suddenly wonder, "Has he heard it? Does he believe it?" For the first time in my life I am afraid—afraid in my own country. Here, in America, I know what it must be like in Russia.

The worm of fear has gnawed its way deep into us all. Suspicion has become a national psychosis, unmatched in any of the European countries where communism is far more real a threat. Never before has the atmosphere of suspicion been so general. We have had our bad moments, to be sure—the persecution of Germans during the First World War, the evacuation of Americans of Japanese descent during the Second. But shameful as our racial and religious persecutions have been, they have at least been limited by their nature, and therefore can be attacked and eventually overcome.

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Now no one is spared, and as a result no one is in a position to strike back. Fear of communism has become communism's most powerful weapon against democracy.

The result?

When the invitation came from Washington for a job which apparently would have used some of my special knowledge, I said no—no, thank you. Why should I stick my neck out? If on no evidence, no fact, all this has happened to me, what would happen if I went to Washington and McCarthy used this batch of baseless rumors to go to work on me as he has gone to work on my friends?

When I was asked to run for town office I thought, why risk it? The rumormongering has already done its job so well that I can't get elected. In the end, though, I did run. One must make a stand somewhere.

Thus the Red scare drives the average citizen underground along with the real Communist. Worst of all is its effect on the salty, everyday informal talk that goes on all over America—across store counters and dinner tables, during factory rest periods, in barber shops and post offices. It is this talk that steers a democracy. Here opinions are formed which later turn into votes. And that talk isn't as free as it once was. I, having been falsely branded, am afraid of the iron. Perhaps I therefore sense the effects more readily. But listen to America talking and you will hear it. The old independence is gone. Fear is in the silences, in the things that are left unsaid and in the hatred of the specter called communism, in the nervous desire to conform, to be thought safe, in the haste to condemn what is labeled radical, socialist, or even liberal. The old spirit of adventure, the willingness to try new paths, is being strangled. It was this brave experimentalism which once made us the hope of the world. The very contempt for authority which sometimes led us to excess was basically a refusal to be confined by any authoritarian credo, a recognition that a society which cannot change is dead. The effect of the investigators and ex-Communists who now accuse loyal Americans of being Reds is to enforce upon us all a form of authoritarianism as rigid and hateful as that of communism itself. The ex-Communist, with the same mental rigidity which made him a dupe to communism, now demands a rigid

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conformity to some new, ill-defined authoritarianism which condemns the liberal-minded for failing to be bound by his new discovery of Truth. A sucker for authority, the ex-Communist can never understand that the essence of liberalism is its ability to change, its independence of the fallacy of a perfect system. America's strength is that it has never been a system, but an experiment.

Moreover, in our eagerness to attack communism we have given it excessive advertising, out of all proportion to the small number of Communists among us. How many advertising campaigns have ever been based on hammering home the name of the competitor's product?

In addition to advertising communism, thus inflating its importance, we have raised its market value by associating with it all forms of social security and public ownership—which, after all, include the Post Office as well as TVA. Thus we condemn measures which actually help capitalism by spreading its benefits wide enough to give satisfaction to the majority. We also condemn most of our allies who, because of limited resources, practice varying forms of socialism. If we want to win friends and influence history, we will have to stop confusing communism and socialism, and implying that good friends like Sweden or essential allies like Britain and France are really in communism's camp. We will have to rid ourselves of the logical fallacy that everything is black or white. Human society, like color, is not black and white but a spectrum. And smart politics demands that we identify ourselves with the widest band of the political spectrum consistent with human freedom. What business firm would seek to improve its position by selling off its soundest assets?

But how can we separate the legitimate exposure of undercover, foreign-inspired Communist activity from the un-American persecution of the man who thinks for himself? Can we have vigilance without hysteria? Can we have freedom without letting ourselves be destroyed from within? Here are a few specific things we could do:

1. Teach the basic principles of Marxism in every high school, so that its falsehoods may become rationally clear, not emotionally obscured, and so that our people will be able to tell the difference

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between what is Communist and what is in the liberal, democratic tradition. How many Americans know, for instance, that communism was tried here three hundred years ago, at Plymouth and Jamestown, and that its failure was the basis for our adherence to the proved system of private enterprise?

2. By movies, radio and every popular medium of information, see to it that the public knows what communism is—not fears it, but knows it—knows the phony intellectual basis on which it rests and the cruelty and disregard of the person to which it leads. To date, our campaign against communism has been emotional when not hysterical. Facts would be safer and more effective.

3. When we hear anyone branded as a Communist, we can refuse to accept rumor and demand proof. There must be tangible evidence of Party membership or a demonstrable act or consistent preachment which is clearly Marxist. Such dangerous logical fallacies as branding a man Red because he has associated with a man who was branded a Red must be exposed.

4. Congressional and other investigating committees must be controlled so that they cannot try innocent citizens in the newspapers and in Star Chamber probes. The old principle that a man is innocent until proved guilty has been inverted by these investigations. Hundreds of loyal, intelligent citizens have been irremediably smeared and their usefulness to the nation has been hampered or destroyed—a clear gain for the Communists. Accusation and trial should be returned to the courts where they belong. To balance Congressional investigation of Red influences, there should be a thorough investigation by Congress of the forces that are attempting to strangle traditional American freedoms and to create a climate of fear and mutual distrust.

Irresponsible Redbaiting is communism's strongest ally in this country, far more effective than the work of real Communists. Only a democracy weakened by fear and suspicion can ever become a prey to communism. Let the FBI clean up the real Reds. And let us attend to the main business of building a stronger, fear-free democracy.

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Some New Forty-Niner Letters

From the Vanderbeck-Banfield Collection

MARY ORMSBEE WHITTON

IN 1949 THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA held a widely publicized centennial of the famous gold strike at Sutter's Mill. Echoes of this celebration stirred a quiet household in New York. Its members recalled packages of old letters which had been sent home from California by adventuring forebears, two of whom were Forty-Niners.

After a lapse of nearly a century, most of the letters were found still unharmed—a bit faded, sometimes a little illegible, but substantially intact. Thus extensive fresh source material centering around early San Francisco now rests in the archives of the New York Historical Society. The collection is named for Abraham Vanderbeck and his son Edwin; his stepdaughter, Mary Banfield; and John Banfield, his English stepson-in-law.

Early California has not lacked annalists, but these letters have a special appeal because they speak for a section of pre-Civil War society that rarely presented itself in pen and ink. This is a strictly everyday memorial, giving it a value beyond its local content. Most important journals of the period emanated from cultured or professional circles. It was as a retiring mayor of New York that Philip Hone started his voluminous diary. John Templeton Strong guarded legal secrets for the leading families of his generation. Seldom did a person of no worldly importance keep a journal, and still less often have such unsophisticated records found their way

✪ MARY ORMSBEE WHITTON, whose "At Home with Lucretia Mott" appeared in the Spring, 1951, issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, is the author of *First First Ladies*. The Forty-Niner letters are part of research on American women of the pre-Civil War period for a second book. Copies of these letters were provided the author by Katherine V. Newsome.

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into print. This is also true of correspondence. The most notable letter writers were also notable citizens.

But not so with Abraham Vanderbeck's stepchildren, Mary Banfield and her carpenter husband, John. They were workaday New Yorkers, distinguished only because they joined the gold rush, survived, and then wrote home about it.

Their letters are completely spontaneous and unrehearsed, messages for the "folks back home." They were not penned with one eye on a publisher, as were "Dame Shirley's" gold-camp compositions. The Banfields show us, without art, the transplanting of a family from Greenpoint in Brooklyn to a greener region near the Golden Gate. Besides glimpses of California, the letters record exactly how one workingman of 1850 felt, thought and expressed himself. This, too, is the case with his wife, the Mary Banfield who became the mother of eight living children and matriarch of a new California clan.

Now let the Forty-Niners speak. First comes Abraham Vanderbeck, the widower who had married the Widow Hadden. His letter of farewell is dated August 11, 1849, on board the S.S. *Mechanic*, bound for California around the Horn. Abraham and his son Edwin had lost little time after word of the gold strike reached New York. They were bent on making *a little capital* to recoup speedily the disaster that had recently overtaken the Vanderbeck-Hadden ménage.

May God in Heaven bless you and yours and bless us all is the prayer of your unfortunate but not misguided husband. When I am on California strand, I shall not forget that I have a bosom companion left in my native city. If I never return Prudence, you will reap the benefit of my toil, therefore I request you for to be to my Mother's grave and settle for that stone, as you will have sufficient from my labour to leave you in a situation in life that you will not be dependant upon your friends . . . and your relatives. . . . If I am weak and drop a tear it is not for want of strength of nerve. . . .

After more farewells to his *guardian angel,* he signs *in love, truth and sincerity, A.V.B.* A postscript of family greetings is rounded off by a hymn quoted in full, "Jesus, I My Cross Have

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Taken." This use of a hymn to close a letter is followed throughout the Vanderbeck letters, picturing Abraham as a regular churchgoer with a good memory. Indeed, his farewell to Prudence has more than a touch of pulpit to it. When the S.S. *Mechanic* reaches Brazil, he lapses into much plainer English for the letter sent back (October 20, 1849) by a New Bedford whaler.

This place [St. Catharine's] *is in South America,* he informs Prudence, *500 miles south of Rio Janiero. I am in good health at present.* The universal complaint of the Forty-Niner follows. *We have been completely duped . . . treated entirely different from what we expected. . . . I have considerable to say but my mind is too absent . . . to express myself. We had a passage of 53 days to this place . . . the style of living is of the most miserable kind. I wonder that there has not been more sickness on board. . . . This is a great place for fruit. Oranges 20 cents per hundred. The people are very indolent, slothful and lazy. . . . Oh that I may receive the scribble of a line from you on my arrival at the Diggings, Prudence, don't forget the wanderer. . . .*

Surviving letters do not tell when he reached San Francisco, but by June 30, 1850, he had been there long enough to receive family letters. Now his own news is bad. At the age of forty-four, he has withstood the privations of the long voyage, but his son has died. *My Edwin is gone home, I hope to a better home than he ever enjoyed here.* The bereaved father resorts to a gospel hymn, then continues more practically: *As regards his widow, for the love of Heaven, as I now drop a tear to his memory . . . watch over her with a parent's love.* He begs Prudence to take the young widow into the family home. *Neither you nor me will be the loser in the end.*

His plea is followed by a grim death roll of friends and acquaintances. The severe winter of 1849 had taken its toll among newcomers huddled in tents and shacks among the sand dunes. Abraham still has with him a cousin by marriage, Jonathan Banfield. *In July him and me proceed to the Feather River to commence mining and if God spares our health we will leave there for our homes, with a small capital sufficient to pay for our exile. Then I will be done roving.*

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After another hymn, he confesses that so far he has not done as well as he expected. But good fortune, he is sure, is just around the corner. *I calculate that Jno. Banfield and me will average our ounce a day at first and double that amount later.* He is distressed that Prudence, meanwhile, has had to take boarders. *But despair not . . . for there is a rich treat in store for you.* She is to write him at Sacramento City in care of Mr. A. Waring. He concludes, . . . *oh dear, I am so tired, farewell beloved . . . remaining your loving husband until time is no more on this earth.*

That is the last word from Abraham Vanderbeck. There is no mention of him in the letters that his stepdaughter, Mary Banfield, was soon writing home to her mother. There is no record of his death in the family Bible that belonged to his beloved Prudence. There are no traces of him in early Sacramento, although Mr. A. Waring apparently survived till 1879. In all probability, Stepfather Abraham was one of the many who found only an unmarked grave at the Diggings.

Undeterred by two deaths in the family, in September, 1851, John and Mary Banfield, with their little Louisa, not yet three, headed for California. They booked passage via Panama as shorter and easier than the Cape Horn route. One thing, though, becomes quickly apparent. As letter writers, both John and Mary deal in far racier colloquialisms. Only once, and that fifteen years later, does Mary reach for the poetic heights of a gospel hymn.

The first Banfield letter is Mary's to her mother, dated from Chagrés, September 6, 1851. *According to promise, I sit down to write you a few lines to let you know we are all alive and kicking. Friday morning before breakfast, I began to be seasick and so was Louisa, We never left our room till Monday morning, then John had to carry me . . . and anybody you know is coming tell them to come in the first cabin or not at all, for such living as it is here . . . . Tin plates, tin cups, iron knives and forks which have never been cleaned since we started, hard bread, herb tea . . . tainted beef, oh it is awful but . . . one of the stewards smuggles me enough to eat from the other cabin for six shillings a day. . . . I wish we was to San Francisco . . . .*

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John adds a page. *We are expecting to see Chagrés every minute. We had a rough time for a few days . . . . I am as well as usual. Louisa . . . is very hearty. Although Mary is sick, she eats her allowance. I shall take the first cabin in the other end of this route . . . tomorrow we take the jackasses . . . .*

An unmentioned member of the family was the baby who would be born in San Francisco. So when Mary Banfield was riding a mule across the Panama mountains, she was in what to literary Victorians was "a delicate condition." Luckily Mary Banfield didn't feel that way about it. *Such a ride as we had . . . a caution to old folks, and if you know anybody that is coming tell them to come the Nicaragua route. It wants a body to be made of money to travel this. Ten cents for a cup of coffee, ten for two pilot biscuits, 30 and 40 cents to lie down on a cot no bed on it, two dollars a day for board here, and a great favor to get it . . . there is so many passengers here. Ten dollars for the mules apiece. Hundred dollars apiece in the steerage from here to San Francisco but we have found plenty of friends who will lend us to get through . . . . I can eat all that comes before me, things that I never thought I could be hungry enough to eat . . . . Louisa says she don't like this excursion as it is too long . . . . We leave today for San Francisco in the steamer Republic . . . . Give my love to all. . . .*

In a letter sent later to Greenpoint, Mary adds more Panama details. *As for the JA ride, it was first rate, all but riding man-fashion, but you can't ride any other way. There was one lady so modest she had to have a side saddle and the first time the mule stumbled she went over his head.* But Mary Banfield, delicate condition and all, rode astride. *My mule went so much faster than the rest and I could not hold her so I just let her go where she liked, uphill and downhill. When she went down, I shut my eyes, but I enjoyed it very well for 5 or 6 hours, then I got tired, but was determined to get to Panama that night and I did.*

Adventures did not cease once they were on board the S. S. *Republic.* Twenty-five miles away from the Golden Gate, the steamer ran on rocks in a heavy fog. A week later (October 5,

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1851), Mary recounted the affair to her mother. *We ran on a rock. We thought it had done us no harm . . . but in about half an hour they looked again and there was three feet of water in the hold, so the purser set off in a little boat . . . to get help. All the men, some 200, set to work bailing out the water and by working from eleven o'clock Sunday morning until Monday, they kept her from sinking until another steamer towed us in. You may form your own idea as to how we felt.* There was also a burial at sea. *We threw one man overboard . . . . I didn't go up on deck to see it. It sounded awful to me to hear the bell toll.*

During the long hours of bailing, John Banfield was worrying about water damage to his tool kit. Little Louisa, he reports, took cold, but *Mary have as good an appetite as I have and drink brandy as bad as I do. We are boarding at present at the Railway House at $100 per month, but this will not do for long.* If Prudence has not already sold her stove and fixtures, she must ship them out around the Horn. *Sell nothing you can send out by ship. . . . The price of stoves is 50 to 75 dollars and rent from 20 to 500 per month and boarding from 10 to 100 per week.*

At this time, the young couple expected Mary's mother to join them soon. But although several others of the clan later tried their fortunes in California, Prudence Vanderbeck remained safely anchored in Brooklyn.

Mary then describes boarding at twenty-five dollars a week in October, 1851. *We are now in a very pleasant house fronting the river* [Bay]. *. . . They have put two chairs in the room and I am sitting on the floor writing this, but never mind, I am well and that is a great thing. Things that I could not have eaten home tastes good. . . . They have the largest vegetables that I ever saw, cabbages weighing 28 pounds, tomatoes large as a saucer. John has gone to see about getting a shanty to go keeping house for we can live comfortable on ten dollars a week.* Beef and pork, she noted, could be had at twenty cents a pound, flour at ten dollars a barrel.

As for San Francisco, it is *first rate all but the sand. . . . It is as noisy as New York, and as for dresses, don't mention it. . . . You hardly see anything but silk and satin. Common straw hats trimmed very plain 8 dollars . . . four cent ribbons home here 25 cents . . .*

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50 cents for 12 hairpins. But earnings also are high. *One day last week a fellow came down from the mines and stopped here. Wanted a pocket handkerchief hemmed. I done it. He gave me fifty cents for it. I wish I had plenty such jobs. I saw a woman today says her and her daughter never earns less than one hundred dollars a week at washing.*

Then comes the first reference to the prospective baby. *I do not expect we shall be able to save any money this winter for doctor's bills is from 25 to 50 for a job. It is almost impossible to get a nurse, I heard of one who charges $55 for ten days so you see this is a great place for money.* Meanwhile John Banfield has been doing well at his trade. Though work is dull just now, he is not uneasy, for he can turn his hand to anything. He can make *five dollars a day to work on the roads . . . or go up to Sacremento . . . as house carpenters for they want men there.*

The next surviving letter is dated February 10, 1852. In it John announces the birth of their first California child, a bit nonchalantly following crop reports. *The weather continues very fine and warm and the vegetables in market are plenty. Radishes and salad are cheap and while we are writing of vegetables you can tell Ike that he is aunt again, for in our garden we had one of the rarest vegetables of the season in the shape of a daughter on the 7th of February at 23 minutes before 7 in the morning. Mary is quite smart and able to eat her allowance . . . and I am nurse. A lady from Alabama comes every day to dress the child and all the neighbors send in goodies so we are getting along right well. Louisa is nearly tickled to death with her young sister and proud to kill. The gal weighs 9½ pounds and twenty inches tall. . . . Is quite hearty.*

John Banfield now has his work cut out for him. The next day he begins: *This evening Mary have took her gin sling and I have killed a rooster for soup tomorrow. I have to do all the cooking in the night. . . . We have plenty of lady neighbors and very clever, and all good breeders. Our next-door lady got a gal last week . . . and four or five every day on the lookout, and one lady . . . has had four pair and ready again—only 27 years old. Hurrah for California!*

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Further domestic items follow day by day. *Finished my day's work by washing shitten diapers and making bread. . . . Mammy, please send Mary a diaper shield pin and send us more letters. We have sent you 5 and this one, and we only got one. Never mind paying the postage, just send the letters.* When a mail ship comes in, *it is a job of journey work to get our letters, we have to take a line and go one after another in turn . . . and sometimes as long as three hours. Just send the letters, we don't mind the trouble.*

The father's report continues the next day. *This is wrote a little now and again and at all hours of day and night,* he apologizes, *you must excuse the broken sentences and bad spelling, but what can you expect of a nurse. . . . As for the young daughter, we have got no name for her, so certain were we of a son that we forgot entirely a name for a girl, and we wish you to send us out a name for her. . . . The seeds in our garden is coming up nice, cabbages, turnips, and beets. . . .*

St. Valentine's finds John *as usual washing clothes,* but *they all say, doctor and all, she is the handsomest and smartest child they ever saw.* Soon they will have a family group taken *of the daguerrotype order* to send to Greenpoint. John is about to mix himself a toddy, *but got to make up dough for tomorrow before I lay down. Good night.* This journal is closed by a brief note from Mary. *Dear Mother: I will just say that I am getting along first-rate. I sit in bed to write this. I hope Em is well and her youngster. Give my best love to all.*

Not till February 28 does Mary write her side of the story. She has been homesick, and particularly she has missed her church. *Oh Mother, how little we think of our privileges of enjoying the means of Grace until deprived of them. I often think oh, for somebody to talk to, oh for the chance to go to one of our prayer meetings . . . but I must say Thy Will, not mine be done. . . . I hope you won't get out of the notion of coming out here . . . for oh dear, how many thousand times I have wished for you when I was sick. Oh, my dear, if Mother was only here I would not mind pain, but here alone it was anything but pleasant. But better neighbors nobody need want and you know John is a first-rate nurse. . . . Prudy grows fat as a pig. She will be three weeks old*

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to-morrow. Today I took a walk. . . . The things in the garden look first-rate.

In a postscript to this letter, Mary uses the phrase *if we should not come back,* the first intimation that the Banfields might be putting down roots in the new soil. John's contribution is practical. He has finished paying for their house *and no rent to pay.* (Also no clue for a researcher to trace its location.) *It costs us about eight dollars per week to live, and that much is easy got here. This is Mary's letter, not mine, she only lets me say a few words . . .* , he complains jovially. *John's a-stuffing you for I believe he is tipsy.M.A.B.* But John has the last word: *That's a lie, so it is.*

Between this and the next surviving correspondence there is a gap of six years. Then on October 4, 1858, Mary Banfield reports the death of little Prudence, whose birth had been so blithely chronicled. This letter was not packaged with the others, but was found folded in the pages of Prudence Vanderbeck's Bible.

I have bad news. We have lost our little Prudy, she died October 3 at 1 in the night of the quinzy croup. Oh, dear me, what a hard Death. We had three of the best doctors . . . but all to no purpose. She was the smartest one of the bunch and her papa's pet. . . . I am as smart as can be expected. Mrs. Craig was with me when Sis died. Oh, how lonely I felt then, no one but strangers to do for me or be with me. But I am tired and can't write any more now.

In those intervening years, Mary Banfield had been increasing her family diligently. Besides Louisa and the child who died, the Brooklyn Bible lists: Emily Augusta, February, 1852; Isaac Newton, the first boy, August, 1854; a second Prudence, October, 1856; and Mary Jane, 1858. With William Francis, born in 1860, the Bible roster ceases. Did Grandmother Vanderbeck tire of writing down these California grandchildren she would never see? But the letters give us Johnny, born in 1862; twins who died; and finally Ida Frances, born after Mary herself had become a grandmother.

Again there is a lapse in the letters preserved. It is also noticeable that reproaches to the home-folks for not writing become more frequent. With California accepted as a permanency, old ties seem to be more precious. *Why in Heaven's name don't you write to*

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us or have you all forgotten us? Mary demands in November, 1863. *I have not got a letter since the one dated March 20 which is eight months.* She goes on to report a new family venture. *We have built on a room in front and got a fruit store, which keeps me pretty busy. . . . The girls help me or I could not get along. Gus is the best housekeeper. . . .*

By spring of 1864, Mary was acknowledging photographs from Greenpoint. *Mammy, I don't want to think you look like that picture. I can't imagine you look so old.* But she wants more pictures, of Lank and Emily, Ike and all the young ones. Now the rising generation in California takes pen in hand. Emily Augusta, by way of a postscript: *Mother intended to send something but she has not been home for a week. She was called out to a sick persons.*

Seven months later, it is Louisa who informs the home-folks that *Mother has been sick eleven weeks and now she has a milk leg. She has been very sick. We have not expected her to live but we are in hopes she will get along again very soon. . . .* Lying in bed, Mary Banfield *scratches a few lines.* She had given birth to twins who lived only a few hours. *Then child-bed fever set in. I did not know anything for three weeks. It left me helpless as a baby. . . . Now I don't know when I shall be up. . . . I beg of you for God's sake not to let it be so long before you write.*

July, 1864, finds John Banfield also complaining. *Tell us how all the folks are doing. You hardly ever mention any names. . . . Gus says that these lines leave us in good health. I don't agree with her for I have an enormous bile on my sit-down. . . .*

He ends with his characteristic crop report. *Provisions is very high and everything else, flour 13.50 a barrel in gold coin . . . potatoes four cents, beef as high as 40 cents per pound. . . . Times is dull but the weather is fine. When this arrives to you, please write as soon as you can. . . .*

A letter from "Gus" (February, 1865) gives an important item—their address, which is now mentioned for the first time in this correspondence. Mail, routed overland since 1859, is being delivered to their door. *Please when you write, direct to: J. F. Banfield, No 732 Harrison Street, San Francisco, Cal.* Harrison Street is

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now two blocks away from a main exit of the Bay Bridge with its huge volume of motor traffic. Although the section was largely rebuilt after the fire of 1906, at 730 Harrison Street there stands a little white wooden house, completely surrounded by business, with a second-story bay window looking out toward what is left of Rincon Hill.

In May, 1865, Mary Banfield received word of the death of her youngest brother, Isaac Hadden, of a New York infantry regiment, who had been taken prisoner at Cold Harbor, June, 1864. He died a year later in a group of sick being returned home from Wilmington, North Carolina. *If he had only died in battle, it would not seem so hard,* his sister laments, *and then to die just as he, poor fellow, thought he was going to get home.* Now there is his widow and four children. Mary wonders what the pension will be, and how they will get along.

A special message to the soldier's mother reveals that the practical Mary Banfield has turned spiritualist. Apparently the cult had sprung up in San Francisco during the war years just as it did in the East. *Dear Mother, don't feel as if you would never meet again, for I believe we shall hear from his spirit and know how he feels in spirit life. . . . I have had positive proof of their return. I have been told things by persons I never saw before . . . from Ed Vanderbeck in particular. . . .*

On a more mundane plane, she reports that Louisa *is getting to look quite womanish. I suppose we shall be losing her before a great while. . . . We are close to the soldiers' quarters . . . and they kind of make it headquarters here, have singing and a bit of fun every night. They like to come where they are treated like white men. . . . They are away from home and friends, and might be in bad company if everybody treated them as a great many do here. . . .*

By September of 1865, Louisa, the little girl who had ridden across the Isthmus, has married and become a mother at seventeen. *Louisa has a fine boy born 5th of this month. She is as smart as can be. . . . Let all the rest know the news. His name is George W. Angle, The double you is for Willard.*

But even in the good old days, young love didn't always turn out

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well. By January, 1870, *Lou and her boy* were back with the parents, and by October, 1871, she had remarried. *She got a divorce and the boy to boot,* John Banfield informs Greenpoint. She is now Mrs. A. L. Rawson of San Francisco, where her new husband owns and drives a large truck. *He is pretty well off.* In spite of a strictly evangelical upbringing, Mary Banfield has no scruples as to this divorce. The first husband was *the most shiftless fellow in God's creation.* Soon Louisa is moving up in the world, with a house at 1616 Jackson Street, on the northwest slope of Nob Hill.

In October, 1867, John Banfield hails the arrival of their twelfth child, a baby girl. *We have an additional member to our family. . . . She is a very fine, smart, intelligent young lady. She arrived here on the eleventh at 1 hour and 30 minutes in the morn. Her wardrobe was scanty as she lost all her clothes on the passage. Molly is up and around as usual. . . . Miss Ida Frances, they all admit that she is the handsomest young lady of her age in the city. . . .*

Trade prospects, though, are poor. *Times is dull. . . . We still work our eight hours, the mail company have sent out about 40 carpenters and caulkers. The most of them are idle and cursing the company. . . . The company said that they would flood the place with mechanics to break up our eight hour system . . . but they have a different class of men to deal with here. . . . Most of us own our own houses. . . . We can work very low and live but not so the newcomers. . . . The eight hours will remain.*

Mary Banfield adds a postscript for her mother. *I am as well as I can expect to be as the new baby is two weeks old today. . . . I suppose you will be surprised at the news of the stranger, for I was when I found out what was coming. I think when one is a grandmother, it is time to stop, but she is as nice as can be . . . there never was a baby like this one. . . . I wish you could see John and I with all our children around us. Little did I think when I left home that I would live to have so many.*

Now John Banfield, viewing his large family, has reached a momentous decision. A letter (October 5, 1870) proclaims that the Banfields *have moved in the country 24 miles from the town of Petaluma, 12 miles from Santa Rosa, 9 miles from Sebastapol . . .*

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in the Russian River country. Apparently sale of the Harrison Street property financed the farm purchase. Today, old county maps still show the Banfield tract in a small upland valley some two miles west of Forrestville, with Green Creek cutting across its southern corner. A hidden valley it still remains, although motor highways slash through Santa Rosa and Sebastapol, and Petaluma calls itself "the egg-basket of the world."

We have bought a ranch or farm of 160 acres, John Banfield informs the Brooklyn relatives. *There is on the place a small orchard and vineyard and cattle enough, two cows, two heifers and a calf, 37 hogs besides poultry and this year's crop just as it stands . . . and a garden well-stocked with vegetables. Molly is delighted . . . and so is all the rest. . . . It is the best corn land in the state of California,* the new owner boasts, *also good wheat land, raises anything you put in the ground. . . .* The youngsters are *having a great time. Last week, one of the boys rolled down a steep hill end over end, another the cow kicked, and Gus fell off the horse.*

The next letter gives their post-office address—Sebastapol, Sonoma County. *Sonoma,* John tells the home-folks, *is celebrated for its fine wines, I wish we could send you some of our grapes. Molly is drying apples . . . and peaches. I expect the boys and girls will learn to milk, they will have to. . . . I forgot to say our brook abounds in trout right at our door almost. Quail in abundance, rabbits and hares that will weigh 8-10 pounds, deer, antelope, coons, ducks, geese, grizzly bears rather scarce. . . . Newton keeps the family in fresh game all the time. I wish you were all out here to enjoy the country life.*

John Banfield now becomes the family scribe. Mary, one guesses, in her farm kitchen has less time for letters. *Gus is at home,* John tells Greenpoint, *Newt also, Jennie, Willie and Johnny going to school, Ida growing like a weed and a spoiled one. Me and Moll, two old fogies.* They are harvesting 40 acres of wheat, 4 of hay, 10 of corn, *spuds, pumpkin and cabbages about 3000. We are going in for vegetables and fruit, about 300 trees. Grapes of a great many varieties.*

Not till the fall of '71 did Mary Banfield write. Then she demands family news and pictures. *Can't any of them write? Don't*

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think that because I am away I don't care how you are all getting along. . . . She has been busy *drying corn and the forty eleven other things to be done on a farm, but we all like it. . . . Never been sick a minute since we have been up here. Ida is as fat as she can roll. . . . She will be four years old on the eleventh of this month. . . .* They have named their place "Birdsnest."

John adds a crop report. *The weather is pleasant when it don't rain,* he concludes. *Gus is playing on the piano while we write. She plays well. Jennie is learning fast and plays good. . . . Newt is going to speak a piece at the closing of school. . . . The rest are learning fast, especially Ida. She knows too much for us.* A new town, Forrestville, about two miles distant, provided a school.

From this point on, letters from "Birdsnest" are joint affairs, signed by *Mary, John and all the rest of the Banfield tribe.* Mary has been at Sebastapol *nursing a sick lady, a Jewess.* Lou, remarried, has a new daughter, *handsome as wax.* The farm continues to prosper. Heat there is *not sultry like in the East.* They are drying fruit, but not as much as usual, *only 300 lbs grapes to dry, apples about the same,* and preserving peaches, pears, quinces, *some 8 dozen cans not to mention tomatoes, cucumbers and dried corn.*

In the fall they *put up 4 grunters for bacon . . . pork is our staple meat but we get some fresh meat twice a week, such as beef, mutton, rabbit, quail, owls, hawks and squirrels, ducks and geese, all is good that's catched in our net.* Wolves are getting scarce, but coons, foxes and skunks are *rather too thick.*

Mary Banfield's section in a later letter admits that she is turning gray. *I begin to look as if my head was dipped in a flour barrel. John is not much gray yet.* Isaac is *larger than his father, Jennie is as tall as me, so is Willie. I have no near neighbors but we have lots of company for all that. . . . We have a dance every little while. . . . We have all got country enough to make patchwork.* John's addenda are agricultural, as usual. *We had snow this winter for the first time. The children were nearly crazy. It was the first snow they ever saw. . . . If the late frost don't catch us we will have a great fruit year.*

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We have all the time been improving our place, Mary writes in the summer of '73, *and we think we have the prettiest place around here. . . . You would laugh to see how we all pitch in and work out in the fields, in the garden or anything. . . . Don't I often wish you was all here. . . . I think you might all of you send us your pictures. . . . If we was there and you here,* she repeats her old plaint, *we would write once a month anyway. . . .*

After a gap of four years (June 6, 1877), Louisa reports from San Francisco. *Mother looks very well. She is very stout and hearty, but Father is failing and is very thin.*

And that is the last of the Banfield letters. The Brooklyn matriarch, Prudence Vanderbeck, never did manage to visit California, though she lived on in Greenpoint till 1882. Her Bible lists no death dates for John and Mary, but old county maps show Mary's name on the quarter section long after that of "J. B." had disappeared.

Eighty years afterward, in this hidden valley of vineyards and fruit, the Banfield name is remembered only as something out of the past. The site of their house is at the end of a rise, with a steep hill behind it, probably the hill that the Banfield youngster rolled down "end over end." Here in this green seclusion, the past seems curiously present. Perhaps, as Mary Banfield believed, their spirits still linger here. Perhaps true pioneers never die.

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..... Under Whatever Sky .....

IRWIN EDMAN

How To Be Brave Cheap

Recently a friend of mine publicly expressed sentiments that he had been cherishing most of his life. They were the decent platitudes of a liberalism so conventional that he had hardly thought them worth uttering—more from fear of falling into cliché than from dread of opposition. The little speech he had made did nothing more than come out for individual liberty and the brotherhood of man. Throughout the next weeks his mail was filled with letters from old friends and from admiring strangers, applauding his forthrightness, his moral bravery, his loyalty to high ideals. He was congratulated for sticking his neck out, for taking a calculated risk, for standing up to be counted. My friend was nothing less than startled at the hullabaloo his mild foray had created.

In the atmosphere of growing tension and of mutual suspicions now current, courage will soon come easy. For the word will be applied—it is already being applied—to situations about which one would never have thought of using it before. Up to the present time, it is true, no one has burst into applause at the ringing announcement that two plus two equals four. But one can imagine a day not too distant when Congressional committees will be suspicious of such subtly subversive utterances. To be aware that two plus two equals four would certainly be of help to any potential enemy. On the whole it would be better if our foes remained ignorant of this basic principle. It is clear, of course, that they would find it out in time. But meanwhile we have a few years' advantage of them, and it would be nothing less than treachery to let them in on the secret now.

Besides, as any alert guardian of our security knows, to say that two plus two equals four is only the beginning. It is an easy step to go on to say that four plus four equals eight, and so on to infinity. The first thing one knows, the whole nation will be habituated to thinking in monstrous integers. Decay and corruption, as historians can assure us, have come to many a nation simply because those who directed its finances began to think in such astronomical figures.

I knew a bureaucrat once who would hesitate to reply even to so innocuous an observation as that it was a lovely day. He would mumble and stammer and finally guardedly assent. His tone would imply that he was not speaking officially, that this was purely a private statement, that he was not involving the institution that employed him. The fear of committing oneself even to a platitude, the caution not to speak aloud those commonplaces that everyone knows—these timidities have invaded serious intellectual circles. Philosophers are learning to speak with greater and greater circumspection about less and less. They want to be sure they know what they are saying, even if in order to do so they must limit themselves to saying nothing worth utterance. On some not-too-distant day, someone is going to declare roundly that there is a world. He will be applauded for his bravery and canonized for his courage. The enunciation of the barest banality will come to seem an act of daring. It will appear to seem heroic even to open one's mouth without so much as making a sound. For very soon now, one will be suspect for what one might have said if one had arrived at saying anything at all.

The Unknown Somebody

It is a chastening experience to spend

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the evening among a group of people all of whom know each other and who repeatedly refer to persons whom they know and whom, up to that moment, one has not even heard of. Recently I was among such a group. Early in the evening there began to be constant references to a man not present who was apparently regarded by everyone there as a person of endless charm, brilliance and resource. The name was Joe. A little later, putting things together, I gathered that his full name was Joe Stokes. Gradually I began to form an impression of what he was like by organizing in my mind the scattered and vague references made to him. Every time he was mentioned, someone would utter some brief approving phrase, some summary, enthusiastic confirmation. Nobody but me needed to have Joe explained or his virtues elaborated. Allusive phrases were enough. From these I slowly formed a profile of Joe's personality, and even some idea of what he did for a living. He was flash-like in intelligence; he was generous in action; he was gay in spirit. Dinner was quite over before I discovered, somewhat to my surprise, that he was a lawyer.

Somewhere near ten o'clock, when the conversation had already widely ranged from Neo-Thomism to broccoli, and from Central Africa to Brazil, it came out indirectly, from a half sentence of interrupted allusion, that Joe had been an able public servant, and that his service had been in Washington.

The party did not break up until midnight. By that time, Joe Stokes must have been referred to some hundred times and had become most vivid and engrossing to me. I had refrained from asking even elementary questions about someone who was to everybody present an old though still obviously attractive story. But as we were leaving, I could not refrain from asking my host, "Could I meet Joe Stokes sometime?"

"Why yes!" said my host in amazement. "But I didn't know you'd ever heard of him. You'd love him; I must tell you about him sometime." He did not seem in the least aware that Joe had been one of the chief subjects of conversation throughout the evening. Nor had I myself realized that Joe had become for me a mild obsession—that I now hoped very much soon to call him my friend. Indeed, I had a feeling that by the next morning I should myself be telling people about old Joe, about his competence, his wit, his charm. It is certainly true that I had never met anyone quite like him.

Truth Detector

The lie detector appears to be a very unreliable instrument for lie detection. The symptoms recorded—blood pressure, muscular reflexes, perspiration in the palms of the hands—these may obviously come from fear, from tension in the presence of examiners, rather than from any guilty sense of having lied. One even imagines that physiological symptoms of excitement or malaise may appear even more emphatically when the victim feels that he has been straying into, stumbling upon the truth.

There are a great many people who, while not accustomed to lying deliberately, have the correct suspicion that they are most of the time, *faute de mieux*, telling half-truths. In listening to other people, it is often not their sincerity one questions but their validity. But on rare instances, on sudden occasions, one feels an authenticity underlying faulty argument. Without benefit of electronic contraption, one recognizes the authentic note, the cadence of the absolute. Occasionally, very occasionally, one is aware in his own speaking of having hit all unexpectedly, after an hour of quarter-truths, upon the truth itself.

The words are out that one had not remotely planned to utter: "I have always thought . . ." one finds oneself saying. And even though it is clear that one has never thought of it until that moment, one feels, without any explanation, that this is Verity itself. This is it, one feels, this is insight, this is revelation. There is a tingle in one's spine; one's heart beats faster; one's eyes glow. A truth detector could be of some service then. But alas, all it would

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detect would be the power of one's self-hypnosis, the compulsion of one's own illusion, the excitement felt, the trance which nothing could refute or disillusion. It would be a happy coincidence if one's feelings that one had come face to face with truth were in themselves a proof that one had done so.

Blithe Man in a Crisis

A man whose mind I greatly respect told me the other day he never wanted to hear about "crisis" again, or to read another book about the dilemmas of our time, or hear another syllable about our "age of anxiety."

"But you're just being an ostrich," I said. "We *are* in a time of crisis. This clearly *is* an age of anxiety, and we *are* on the horns of a dilemma; we are, indeed, on the horns of several dilemmas."

"Oh, I don't know," my friend replied calmly. "Humanity has always been in a crisis. The only special thing about the current one is that it *is* current. Mankind has always been on the horns of a dilemma. Men have always been uneasy about the future, and there have been plenty of people, usually older ones, who have been concerned about the decay of civilization, or tense about the imminent end of the world." He blew out the match he had been holding through this little speech.

"But," I said impatiently, "that's cold comfort. We are clearly in a *worse* fix than usual. We may blow ourselves up at any moment, or be blown up. And the more we organize to defend our liberties, the more danger we seem to be in of losing our freedom. And if all that isn't something to be anxious about, pray, what is? You're a stock or a stone, man, if you don't know how anxious we should be; you're blind if you can't see the impasse we're in."

"Oh well," my friend retorted, "I'll grant you we're in an age of anxiety all right. No doubt about it. But I'll tell you one of the things that makes it so: the to-do we make about anxiety itself. It is enough to have things to worry about without worrying about the fact that we are worrying. It is bad enough to face some real and some possibly desperate alternatives without crying havoc even before havoc has come.

"As for the 'horns of a dilemma,' those are purely rhetorical and are—or have—only debaters' points. We are told, for instance, that either you surrender freedom or kill it in the process of defending it. I don't know. England managed to defend liberty and to preserve it at the same time. Science, we are reminded, has increased the means of destruction. Therefore we must stop learning or face extinction as the result of our knowledge. A fake dilemma if ever I saw one. Atomic energy can cure as well as kill. And as for anxiety itself, that's one thing at least that I refuse to be anxious about. I'll leave that to the psychologists who talk like theologians and the theologians who talk like psychologists. They're looking after anxiety; they're doing all the talking about it that's necessary, perhaps more than necessary."

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. . . . . The Revolving Bookstand . . . . . .

An Event in Literary Scholarship

THE SERMONS OF JOHN DONNE. Edited with introductions and critical apparatus by George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson. Volume I. *Berkeley: University of California Press. 354 pp. $7.50.*

Reviewed by JAMES HOLLY HANFORD

The preaching of John Donne was a sensational thing in his own day, and, thanks to Izaak Walton, its fame has survived as part of the image of the man himself, in the tortured holiness of his later years. Recent enthusiasm has been mainly reserved for the poetry, but as the ranks of his admirers have widened and his art and thought have been made the subject of inquiry, more and more persons have explored the prose, until intimations of the marvelous things to be found in it have even reached the general reader. One great masterpiece among the sermons, *Death's Duell,* called by "those who saw his tears and heard his hollow voice" Donne's own funeral sermon, has been frequently reprinted, and the rhythms of a solemn passage from the *Devotions* have been made familiar through its use by Hemingway: ". . . therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

For all this it may fairly be said that Donne's sermons as a whole (there are one hundred and sixty of them) have been a closed book in modern times. They were reprinted, not quite in full and with a modernized text, by Dean Alford in 1839. Aside from this, they have been available only individually or in small collections and anthologies. The original folios which Donne himself prepared for publication do not exist in many libraries, and the quartos, though more numerous than those of Shakespeare's plays, are nevertheless collector's items. The appearance of a definitive edition by two well-known and highly competent Donne scholars is a memorable event in literary scholarship. The first volume contains the text of nine sermons with introductory comment and critical notes. There is also a detailed bibliographical discussion and a brilliant essay on the literary value of the sermons as a whole. These studies are, in each case, the joint work of the two editors, an example of complete collaboration as successful as it is rare. The book is beautifully printed and is well calculated to make the study of Donne fruitful, even for persons who approach him with only a layman's interest and equipment.

Unlike Alford, the present editors are less concerned with the sermons as divinity than as literature. Donne was and remained essentially a poet. "He had the poet's feeling for the color and . . . sound of words. He was able to please, or surprise, or shock, in prose as he had done in verse. . . . Donne's prose conveys to us the unmistakable flavor of the man's personality, and the study of it is an exciting experience." The salient features of his style are the long period, modeled on Latin usage, but combined effectively with short and pithy sentences; the skillful use of alliteration, antithesis, paradox, irony; the repetition of words; and, above all, startling and original imagery. In their discussion of these traits the editors follow the method of close analysis, taking key passages from the sermons and saying explicitly what is characteristic and significant about them. This is an unusual procedure in an edition primarily scholarly, but it is humane and justifiable. Donne's sermons are difficult, and unless our inter-

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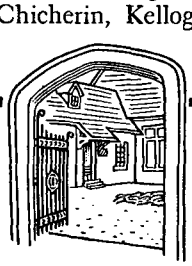

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A Magnificent Mixture

THE SECOND SEX. By Simone de Beauvoir. Translated and edited by H. M. Parshley. *New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 732 pp. $10.00.*

Reviewed by EVELYN EATON

During the last decade, a European novelist of impressive stature, who is also a leading existentialist and an intelligent Frenchwoman, reached the conclusion that "woman is not a completed reality, but rather a becoming, and it is in her becoming that she should be compared with man; that is to say her *possibilities* should be defined," but not her possibilities only. "Concerned to find out what humanity has made of the human female," as the translator ambiguously puts it in one of his rare slips, for *il s'agit de savior,* Mademoiselle de Beauvoir undertook to define and discuss, at enormous and sometimes repetitious length, the whole estate of womanhood here on earth since the beginning of time.

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It is well written and has been faithfully translated by Professor H. M. Parshley, with

✪ Novelist and critic EVELYN EATON has worked and studied on the Continent for many years. She is a visiting lecturer in English at Columbia University and in creative writing at Sweet Briar College.

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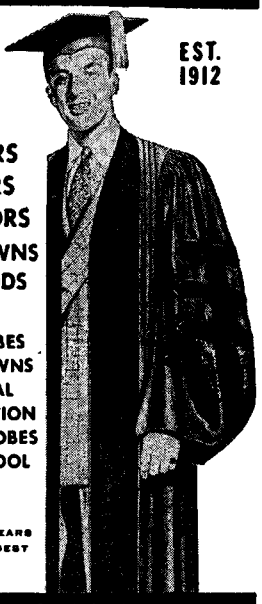

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much of the verve of the original. If, as some critics contend, the first and most important test of a successful book is that it be "readable and memorable," *The Second Sex* passes, *cum laude*. It says a number of things which have not been said before, or at least not all in the same argument; it asks indignant questions and hurls one-sided answers; it arouses antagonism and dissent, and some approbation—it is exciting to read and difficult to forget.

Since its 1949 publication in France, in two volumes, Europeans have recognized in it a "masterpiece," a "classic" and a "milestone" in the study of the role and destiny of woman in modern and ancient times; but we take cognizance of milestones as we draw abreast of them and pass them. Nothing dates so quickly as the up-to-date, as yesterday's "latest thinking"; and there is a curiously old-fashioned ring to some of Mademoiselle de Beauvoir's generalizations and conclusions, especially to an American ear.

"The truth is that for man she is an amusement, a pleasure, company, an inessential boon; he is for her the meaning, the justification of her existence": what is this but a paraphrase of "He for God only, she for God in him," passed, surely, several milestones back? To say of American women: "They like having a job and proving to themselves that they are capable of handling it properly but they are not passionately concerned with the *content* of their tasks"; or of women in general: "We rarely encounter in the independent woman a taste for adventure and for experience for its own sake"; or to state: "Of the legion of women who toy with the arts and letters, very few persevere," as if this were not equally true of the legion of male would-be writers and artists; to talk blandly, in this age of unremitting tasks and pressures upon women, against too little time, of "the vast leisure she enjoys," of her deciding "to paint or write merely to fill her empty days"—all of this is to be perched upon a milestone far behind us.

The limitation of generalization is that to be true or effective, it must deal with the general and not the particular. Too often

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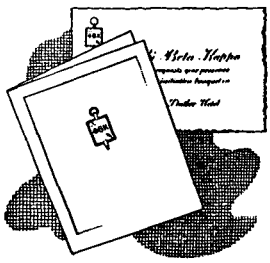

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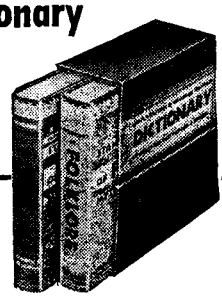

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By the time orphaned Chick came to live with his aunt and uncle, they had a son, Ellis, about the same age. Chick is the narrator of this story of two years on the homestead. "We lived plumb in the middle of everything," he says, and he was not far from right; their home was close to the Ninety-eighth Meridian. Wagon ruts called roads led every which way—to Californy, to Colorado, to the North Pole, and to Back East, a place inhabited by a race of men in plug hats who squeezed things called Mortgages and drank the juice, which was Intrust. They were very bad men, natural enemies of the growers of wheat and corn.

Then, there was the Buffalo Waller of the book's title, a depression in the prairie near the sod hut, that had been formed by generations of bison rubbing their itchy backs in the under-sand. The bison had gone, and the two boys used the wallow as a playground. In its banks they dug caves, where they hid their plunder of broken firearms and other odds and ends dear to boys. Here they camped out, fought Indians, explored unknown regions, roped cattle and did all manner of things.

The Waller was in that portion of the homestead which Lige, who was not cursed with ambition, hadn't got around to plowing. He did plan to break it, however, and this was the great danger that hung over Chick and Ellis. To their mind, plowing land spoiled it. The boys did what they could to delay the time when Lige should bust the sod of their magical Waller. But the awful day came at last. Lige set the plow into the ground, and away went the team, in their wake a furrow half a mile long—yet when he came to the Waller, Lige plowed around it. So long as Chick remained, the boys had a good acre of prairie sod in the midst of corn and wheat.

Seventy years later, Chick and Ellis drove over paved highway to look for the Buffalo Wallow. Tractors had filled it, though a slight depression remained. Past it whizzed cars and people who couldn't know that here for a season had been a place of high adventure and romance for a couple of one-gallus boys. After Lige's death, Effie had sold the place at two hundred dollars an acre, thus putting her in the class of the Plug Hats Back East.

Now well into his seventies, Mr. Jackson looks back on what in retrospect seems to have been two wonderful years. He recalls that the Germans and Russians made the best homesteaders. They built frame houses, they had buggies; the Plug Hats were never a threat to them, perhaps chiefly because they worked like Trojans—men, women and children. He remembers cowhands as no more romantic than so many horse-mounted rustics who did not care for work. He recalls the few surviving Indians as silent shadows passing in the distance. He is still bewildered by the economic laws that permitted a good two-thirds of the tons of food harvested every fall to rot for want of market.

Mr. Jackson also wonders if the present farm youngsters of Nebraska, and their elders, are as happy as the family that lived in a sod hut under the great sky that blazed for months on end, then turned into a dark and savage season which used up all the coal by March and left Effie to do her endless cooking on a fire of twisted straw and big ears of yellow corn.

But the author is mostly concerned with re-creating the life and times of the place and period. This he has done with humor and a fine eye for detail. The rather contrived business of Effie's marrying off a cowhand to a German immigrant is an intrusion and adds nothing to Mr. Jackson's sure touch with blizzards, prairie roses and the Waller. This is Americana as authentic as the surveyors' iron stake that marked 98° West Longitude.

A Twenty-Nine Year Exchange

HOLMES-LASKI LETTERS: The Correspondence of Mr. Justice Holmes and Harold J. Laski, 1916-1935. Edited by Mark DeWolfe Howe. Two volumes. Illustrated. *Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1650 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by ASHER LANS

These volumes contain an exchange of correspondence continued over twenty-nine

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years between the most revered American jurist and one of the ablest contemporary political pamphleteers. In their formal writings, both Holmes and Laski reveled in the exploration of ideas. Unfortunately, their letters tended to be both fragmentary and adulatory and only occasionally developed an interchange of views worthy of the authors' intellectual powers.

While not up to the standard of the previously published correspondence between the Justice and his older friends Sir Frederick Pollock and Morris Cohen, the present letters make interesting reading. For the most part, the younger man set themes for the correspondence which revolved about his reading, his reports (real or imaginary) of meetings with important personages, his political activities and his ever-changing enthusiasms. Holmes's letters are uneven in caliber; he complains that he can only write about the "quiet doings of a would-be recluse." Laski's letters are livelier in tone, although sometimes uncomfortably egocentric. He has a gift for the telling phrase and the thumbnail book review.

The greatest value of the present volumes is the insight they present into the intellectual and emotional makeup of both men. The cast of Justice Holmes's mind was oracular, and, in his later years, he rarely troubled to organize his ideas. He repeatedly observed that he cared only for *aperçus*, not for systems: "There is little legal theory that strikes me as worth talking about." Formal reasoning, statistics and the marshaling of evidence all bored Holmes. He professed antipathy to loose generalization, but his letters abound in abstract statements, given an illusion of novelty by the pithy vigor of his style.

In large measure, Holmes's reputation as a judicial liberal was created by his defense of civil rights and by opinions in which he dissented from the Supreme Court's invalidation of wage and hour laws and similar social legislation. The present correspondence, however, corroborates the impression created by his few printed essays that the Justice's own views were conservative and colored by his military experiences during the Civil War. In one letter he summarizes his philosophy as "belief in force (mitigated by politeness)" and describes Laski's "belief in some apriorities like equality" as "humbug."

Holmes's conservatism was offset by his skepticism as to the validity of his own (or any other) principles and by the feeling that "there is a great deal of ruin in a nation." Devotion in early maturity to the history of the Common Law contributed to his sense of the relativity of human institutions. Hence, on a bench whose members were inspired by "vague terror" to transplant Spencer's *Social Statics* into the Constitution, Holmes evolved a doctrine of laissez faire for legislative action.

Laski's letters mirror a personality of intense physical and nervous energy. He is always overwhelmed with admiration for a book he has just finished reading, a new acquaintance, or a recently developed theory in any of a dozen fields of learning. Never falsely modest, in one letter he refers to himself as "feeling like a tired God."

Although prodigiously learned and devoted to teaching, Laski's zealotry frequently made him a partisan journalist rather than a scholar. His mind was impressionistic and glib; his opinions were subject to quick change, but almost always expressed in authoritative form. He found especial delight in the French eighteenth-century reformers and was himself always riding off on a hobbyhorse to a new intellectual war.

In the best sense of the term, both Holmes and Laski were amateurs whose interests covered the whole field of human learning and effort, past and present. They had spent too much time in the library to be impressed merely "with the scaffolding of research."

On Holmes's seventy-fifth birthday, Laski dedicated one of his innumerable books to him, inscribed "to the youngest of my friends." The old judge retained to the end his unflagging interest in all human activi-

✪ ASHER LANS is a practicing attorney in New York City. He was formerly a lecturer at Brooklyn College, Hunter College and The College of the City of New York.

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ties. Although he believed that "great works survive largely by style," Holmes reread Spinoza, Spengler and Dewey in his nineties and continually urged his younger friend to keep him abreast of the latest intellectual fashions and to recommend the best new books.

The letters have been annotated by Professor Mark DeWolfe Howe, whose brief felicity of style adds to the charm of the correspondence.

Brief Comments

MY HOST THE WORLD. By George Santayana. *Scribner's. $3.00.*

Santayana's *My Host the World* is a short concluding and posthumous volume of his personal reactions and reflections. The first chapter, "A Change of Heart," and the last chapter, "My Host the World," are as eloquent a statement as he has ever written of his aesthetic detachment and his contemplative aestheticism. The intervening chapters consist largely of ironical, reminiscent reflections and memoirs of the private personalities of various eminent figures who were Santayana's acquaintances or friends. "Bertie" Russell is one of these and his older brother, Lord Russell, is another. Lowes Dickinson and MacTaggart of Cambridge are still others. Not much love is lavished on any of these, but the sources are amusing and revealing. Places are on the whole more movingly described than persons—and above all, Rome.

EDUCATION AND LIBERTY: The Role of the Schools in Modern Democracy. By James Bryant Conant. *Harvard. $3.00.*

This volume is Mr. Conant's testament in education, reviewing, condensing and summarizing much of what he has found worth working for—and fighting for—in his fruitful twenty years as president of Harvard University. Its central theme is, first, that education in our democracy must make workable the principle of the "career open to talents," which is to him the central meaning of our American faith in equality; and second, but quite as important, that such education must, so to speak, put a firm bottom under the ladder for talent by giving to those who cannot rise very high on it a general education that will make them responsible citizens of a democracy. The university is for the first end; and it should be open, through adequate financial aid, for the talented, no matter what their parents' position. The high school, supplemented by regional two-year colleges stemming from the high school, is for the second end. A careful reading of this book will show that, contrary to what his opponents have said, Mr. Conant would not abolish all schools save public schools. He does, however, believe firmly in the public high school as a core of American education.

ALWAYS THE YOUNG STRANGERS. By Carl Sandburg. *Harcourt, Brace. $5.00.*

So skillful is this master storyteller in the telling of his own story that it seems he

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must have jotted down each anecdote at the time it happened and a description of the people he met at the time of meeting. During the period covered—from "I was born on a cornhusk mattress" to Sandburg's entrance in Lombard College—the author serves more as a companion than a guide in introducing the countless "young strangers," and not a few older ones, who crossed his wandering path.

THE WORLD AND THE WEST. By Arnold J. Toynbee. *Oxford. $2.00.*

This little book is based on a series of lectures Mr. Toynbee gave in 1952 for the British Broadcasting Corporation. It is a kind of preview, simplified and without scholarly apparatus, of one of the important topics that will be fully treated in the last four volumes of his great *Study of History*, due in 1954. This topic is "encounters between civilisations," and the portion here considered is the current encounter between the West and those civilizations Mr. Toynbee finds still "alive"—the Russian, the Indian and the Far Eastern. The reader who is acquainted with Mr. Toynbee's terminology and general framework of ideas will find this a clear and stimulating application of them to the problem of our contemporary conflict with Russia. The reader who is not so acquainted will do better to go first to the six volumes of the *Study of History* already published or to Mr. D. C. Somervell's masterly one-volume condensation of them.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. Edited by Roy P. Basler and others. Nine volumes. *Rutgers. $115.00.*

This is the first critical edition of Lincoln's writings, and it clearly supersedes all others. Not only is it the most complete collection to date, absorbing every discovery since Nicolay and Hay, and going on to offer many more of its own; it is also the most scrupulously edited, the most fully and accurately documented. It is a monument, certain of long life, to one of the greatest American writers as well as men. It will be indispensable to any good library and to any serious student of Lincoln.

THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL JOHNSON: With Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him. Collected and edited by R. W. Chapman. *Oxford. $35.00.*

Since the last previous edition of any pretensions, many new letters have come to light. Here are the 1,515 known to exist, recopied from the originals wherever possible, edited with fanatical attention to textual accuracy, and provided with the full apparatus of scholarly annotation. The completely new letters are of no great significance, but the value of the edition as such is very great. Uniform with the Hill-Powell edition of Boswell's *Life* and an indispensable accompaniment to it.

THE WRITER IN AMERICA. By Van Wyck Brooks. *Dutton. $3.00.*

Mr. Brooks looks at contemporary literature in America, and finds it too far alienated from the optimistic currents of life; at the contemporary criticism of literature, and finds it too much devoted to virtuosity and a few exclusive fashions. Mr. Brooks explains the principles on which he has constructed his history of the writer in America, *Makers and Finders*, and makes an appeal for an enlightened nationalism of poets, novelists and thinkers. While Mr. Brooks may displease many high- and low-brows, the middle reader will welcome his sturdy and independent opinions.

CHARLES DICKENS: His Tragedy and Triumph. By Edgar Johnson. Two volumes. *Simon & Schuster. $10.00.*

For the first time since it was published, three-quarters of a century ago, John Forster's life of Dickens is superseded. Mr. Johnson has the facts which Forster suppressed, as well as the facts which Forster printed; he has used documents unknown to Forster and has drawn conclusions from them consonant with the intellectual atmosphere of 1953, instead of 1872. All too often, scholarly biographies are dull. Dickens is not easy to be dull about, but we all know Ph.D.'s who could achieve it. Mr. Johnson, however, is a successful rebel against academic tradition. He has produced a biography both erudite and readable.

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THE MAN WHISTLER. By Hesketh Pearson. Illustrated. *Harper. $3.75.*

An experienced biographer turns his attention to the brilliant, Mephistophelean figure of James McNeill Whistler, painter of genius, man of trenchant wit, turbulent temper and irrepressible individuality. Mr. Pearson has been able to add fresh material to his readable account through his conversations with some who actually knew Whistler; and Wilde, Shaw, Disraeli and other personalities previously treated by the author appear in the background as friends or enemies. The result is a memorable, although enigmatic, portrait of the scintillating eccentric whose symbol became the bright butterfly with the long sting.

PRINCE OF PLAYERS: Edwin Booth. By Eleanor Ruggles. Illustrated. *Norton. $4.50.*

Although much had been said and written about Edwin Booth, a full and definitive portrait of the man in relation to his family, his time and the American theater remained to be done. With the publication of this volume the need has been filled, and it is fortunate that the task was undertaken by Miss Ruggles. Extensive research coupled with the author's ability to write clear, perceptive prose have produced a biographical drama enacted by an uncountable cast of the great and the near-great, but in which the spotlight constantly follows that "sweet, majestic face the Prince of Players wore."

THE MORMON VILLAGE. By Lowry Nelson. Illustrated. *Utah. $5.00.*

"The manner in which rural people arrange their habitations upon the land constitutes one of the important factors determining the nature of the social organization." Thus a distinguished social scientist states the basis of his thorough and carefully documented study of the Mormon settlements in the West and of the life and achievement of the pioneers who built them. The detailed analysis of the changes in a number of villages over the past twenty-five years is of especial value to any student of American social patterns, and of the rural scene in particular.

THE SILENT WORLD. By Captain J. Y. Cousteau with Frédéric Dumas. Illustrated. *Harper. $4.00.*

A daring and dedicated group of French divers have for fifteen years been exploring the undersea world, "the last great unknown," with color cameras and their miraculous invention, the aqualung, which gives them almost complete freedom in the sea. Their spokesman, Captain Cousteau, tells a story of high, fresh adventure, exciting from beginning to end and magnificently illustrated, of men who are laying the groundwork for the sea age they feel is soon to come—swimming "across miles of country no man had known, free and level, with our flesh feeling what the fish scales know."

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF INSECTS. By Albro Gaul. Illustrated. *Rinehart. $4.00.*

Unlike most entomologists, who give their time and writing to the control of insect pests, Albro Gaul has devoted the greater part of his readable and soundly accurate study to those more than ninety-five per cent of all insect species which are beneficial or at least neutral to man. In concluding this altogether fascinating appraisal of the activities, strengths and potentialities of six-legged creatures, the reader will find needed reassurance in Mr. Gaul's emphatic statement that insects will never rule the earth. Added distinction is given to this book in that it is the first product of the new Higonnet-Moyroud photographic type composing machine.

POSSUMS. By Carl Hartman. Illustrated. *Texas. $6.00.*

The opossum, that strange and primitive American marsupial, has intrigued zoologists since the time of Columbus. Dr. Carl Hartman, the distinguished embryologist has now collected in a readable and well illustrated volume just about everything known about the animal, and has separated the facts scientifically established by himself and other competent observers from the mass of pseudo-scientific and purely fictional material pertaining to this curious mammal. The author has a certain amount

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of academic fun comparing these earlier writings with his own careful observations, but, alas, in at least one instance he has himself slipped, through the use of misleading and inaccurate photographs purporting to show that opossums can kill the deadly moccasins!

SPRING BIRTH AND OTHER POEMS. By Mark Van Doren. *Holt. $3.00.*

Mark Van Doren is a poet of quiet voice. He writes with a strong religious feeling, which is expressed without reference to dogma or traditional rituals. Deeply aware of the turbulence and despair of our age, he is still able to reflect on the wonders of love and nature, the challenge of Time and nostalgia for its passing. Mr. Van Doren's poetry is introspective and provocative, and his writing has a classical simplicity and austerity which are both lyrical and penetrating.

WILLA CATHER: A Critical Biography. By E. K. Brown, completed by Leon Edel. *Knopf. $4.00.*

An encomium to the spirit and art of Willa Cather, this biography presents a thematic analysis of her writings in the light of the available source material about her family background and the social environment which molded her. In her early years in Red Cloud, Nebraska, Willa Cather witnessed the transition of a pioneering community to a narrow and stultifying provincial town. The strength, beauty and endurance she found in the pioneering forces of American life captured her imagination. Artist and pioneer were, for her, paired together in the struggle against the crude materialism and conformity of the civilization which had succeeded it. Although she lived many years in the busy cities of the East and traveled widely, she was always in search of the past. The noble spirit and gracious traditions of the Old World, the vitality of those immigrant pioneers on the Nebraska Divide, her own frustrations as a nonconforming and artistic personality in Red Cloud—these were the molding forces of her spirit and art. Mr. Brown and Mr. Edel have presented a revealing study of Miss Cather; and, except for the sometimes cloying effect of their reverential attitude, it is informative and pleasant reading.

A GOOD MAN. By Jefferson Young. *Bobbs-Merrill. $3.00.*

Albert Clayton has a wife, Louella, and a family. He works Mr. Tittle's land, lives in Mr. Tittle's shack. Since he'd like a home as handsome as a white man's, he plans to paint it white. That sounds like an innocent aspiration, but white neighbors do not approve of a cabin in the sky for Albert. That he is not lynched may prove there's progress in the South; but that he still does not get his paint job is in a way as evil as lynching itself. This is one of the season's best and most challenging novels—quiet and strong.

THE PLANTATION. By Ovid Williams Pierce. *Doubleday. $3.00.*

A worthy man, Ed Ruffin, who has the strength of his reliable convictions, is the central character in this novel. While aged Mr. Ed lies on his death bed, friends and memories come swarming in from all over the plantation and from the farther reaches of the South in which he, his elders and his juniors lived their rich lives. From the very start—when Mr. Pierce notes the flies settling ominously on the unconscious man, and when the Negro child unerringly senses that Mr. Ed stricken is no longer Mr. Ed—the reader realizes that this is a remarkably perceptive writer.

THE STONES OF THE HOUSE. By Theodore Morrison. *Viking. $3.50.*

Theodore Morrison's *The Stones of the House* is a rare first novel: it is civilized, gentle and civil. The chief problem it poses is what good does doing good do. Mr. Morrison tries to define his answer by solving the questions of his plot: Will the acting university president get the presidency? Will the new library get built? Will the rich old boor get the word? Will academic freedom win? But in the struggle to resolve his questions, Mr. Morrison has tied all the strands of his plot together in a slightly textbookish fashion. None the less, the book can still be warmly recommended.

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *Phi Beta Kappa Hall, Williamsburg, Va., and should not exceed 300 words in length except on request. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*—EDITOR.

Modern Man and the Intellectual

Joseph Wood Krutch, in his very penetrating analysis of "The Loss of Confidence" [AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Spring, 1953], has made, I believe, one fallacious major assumption which leads him astray. "Modern man," Mr. Krutch argues, has lost confidence in his ability to govern himself because he has accepted the philosophy of materialistic rationalism, which tells him that he is not a free agent capable of choice and decision, but "merely the product of the forces that have operated on him."

Who is "modern man"? If Mr. Krutch is referring to intellectuals as a class, his thesis may be valid. But his description of disillusion scarcely applies to the vast majority of Americans, most of whom know little of either Shaw or Wells (whom Mr. Krutch uses as examples of the loss of confidence) and are totally unacquainted with the philosophy of materialistic rationalism.

Fortunately, the intellectuals who have lost confidence have had very little influence on the man in the street. If the intellectual will leave his cloister and go out among the farmers and mechanics and factory workers and manufacturers and merchants in this time of unprecedented national prosperity, he will find, I believe, abundant optimism, ample confidence in the rewards of enterprise and ingenuity, and an unspoken belief in the power of the individual to make of himself what he will.

I happen to believe that much of this confidence is misdirected. We are too prone to assume that the present summer solstice in this country is universal and perpetual. Probably the most dangerous aspect of American self-confidence is what D. W. Brogan calls the illusion of American omnipotence, a notion which is playing havoc with our foreign policy.

All of which points up the real task of the intellectual who has lost confidence. His job is to get out into the streets and the factories and the farms, to walk among the people, to learn the nature of American confidence, to absorb some of it himself, and to give it the guidance and direction it so vitally needs.

HAROLD GILLIAM
Laguna, California

* * *

I make no apology for considering the attitude of intellectuals because I do not consider even conscious intellectuality necessarily stultifying—especially when, as in the case of my article, "the intellectual" is defined so broadly as to include the whole public for such writers as Wells and Shaw. In my opinion there is good reason for believing that materialism, determinism, and a general conviction that not we, but "society" is responsible for our defects have filtered down to the class which believes without knowing quite what it believes and that, in the long run, intellectuals of one kind or another do influence that more or less inarticulate mass which Mr. Gilliam seems to believe the only one worth considering. One does not have to understand Einstein's mass-energy formula to be blown up by a bomb.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH
Tucson, Arizona

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An Obvious Error

In the current issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR [Spring, 1953], the article "Do Economists Know Anything?" portrays instructively some of the reasons for contradictory forecasts by individual economists, and the need for a healthy skepticism on the part of readers in interpreting statistical data. Doesn't Professor Machlup strain too hard to make his point, however, when he represents an increase in national income from 161 billion dollars to 182.8 billion as an increase of 21.8 per cent (page 173)?

RALPH C. GRAY
Cleveland Heights, Ohio

* * *

I read with interest the article "Do Economists Know Anything?" in the Spring issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

I would like to know how Mr. Machlup, on page 173, arrives at a percentage of 21.8 per cent when discussing national income figures. The dollar difference is indeed 21.8, but according to my calculations the percentage difference is 13.5 per cent. Small wonder, under these circumstances, that economists are often wrong in their estimates.

If economics is to become a science, we must stay away from inaccuracies such as the above; and further, we must refrain from such unscientific bases as "average mixture of common stock" and "representative common stock for the period" (page 170). These figures can quite obviously be slanted to suit the purpose of the premise we are trying to prove or defend.

CARL E. GUTMAN
New York, New York

* * *

To be sure, the difference in the national income figure was 21.8 billions, not per cent. The typist's obvious error and the author's oversight are regrettable, but should not deceive Messrs. Gutman and Gray or any other American scholar.

Mr. Gutman can check up on what appears to him as "unscientific bases" of comparisons by referring to the scholarly analysis by Alfred Cowles, "Can Stock Market Forecasters Forecast?" *Econometrica*, Vol. I (1933), pp. 310-11 and 315.

FRITZ MACHLUP
Johns Hopkins University
Baltimore, Maryland

Steady, Steady!

The Van Doren and Jones articles in your Autumn '51 number showed, I thought, some demoralization. Is there something of this in your current Spring number?

Mr. Redding begins, "We have lost the sense of wonder." Have you? Later on he speaks of fear being "the connecting principle." Is it? The scholars, he says, should blame themselves. They no longer teach "delight in learning" or extract wisdom from it. They default to "practical men" its uses and goals. He calls upon them, in conclusion, to distill wisdom in their consciences and to speak out to the world.

One might reply, "Steady, steady!" The scholars' role is perhaps to remain sane, especially in this time of generalized emotion and excessive broadcast of moralities. Counter-hysteria will not quell hysteria. One man's "true wisdom" may be another man's cant. Valid propositions, such as, for example, "Institutions should serve those concerned" and "The norm is truth," may become the less operative the more they are repeatedly asserted out of circumstance and are taken as slogans. One hopes our intellectual life will remain healthy, a clear area.

Mr. Krutch should take up mathematics, that certain science of that about which one knows nothing. His confidence that others are mistaken and shaken and that his aesthetic concoction and appreciation of things are somehow a working description of them provides comic relief. The habits of literary criticism perhaps do not carry over so well into objective social analysis.

In his article he attributes to "Science" (capital "s," p. 152) and to a "materialistic rationalism" our possibly "correct and fatal" views about ourselves. But an im-

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proved "science of man" (small "s," p. 153) may save us. Awaiting Mr. Krutch's next—*The New Age of Faith*, I wager—we may as well keep our sense of proportion and act reasonably.

ALFRED OGLE
Fairfield, Connecticut

More About Loyalty Oaths

The dissent of Mr. Norm Gelman to my opinion about the secular loyalty oath is noted in your Spring, 1953 publication.

If a person is loyal to the United States of America, I am puzzled why he or she would refuse to take a written loyalty oath similar to that taken by our naturalized citizens. Loyalty of the subject is implied; yet, under certain circumstances, the state may demand that it be expressed in writing.

If a person is loyal to God, I am puzzled why he or she would refuse to pledge to keep the Ten Commandments. A loyal Hebrew or Christian would not hesitate. Therein is a loyalty pledge! For this there is precedent. The first Christians made the pledge openly. See Pliny's letter to his Emperor, Trajan, about the Christians.

With the disloyal and the heathen there is persuasion, but no debate. As I write this statement, I have no particular individual or individuals in mind. I prefer to let my readers classify themselves.

WILLARD L. DE YOE
Hewitt, New Jersey

Cost of National Existence

I enjoyed and heartily applaud Dr. Julian P. Boyd's excellent article "The Fear of Ideas," published in the Autumn issue. However, Boyd says on page 419: "Individual liberty purchased at the cost of national existence would be meaningless." Why? Texas and Hawaii surrendered their national existence and seem none the worse for it.

MARY ELLEN KRUG CASE
Seattle, Washington

Quantity or Quality?

Several issues ago, Donald Lloyd offered "The National Mania for Correctness" as an explanation for the bad writing of literate Americans. In view of the slovenly English encountered on all sides, I would not have supposed there is such a mania. But since Mr. Lloyd has observed it, perhaps we must provisionally accept it.

In any event, a "mania" for correctness must be quite a minor factor. A more important factor in bad writing may be found in the temper of our time. This is a nervous, impatient, excited age. Under its whip and spur, many men write too fast and too much. They do not take pains to write well. They do not rewrite their text until they achieve clarity and style.

It takes more than a disregard of the rules of correct English to convert pedagese into lucid and workmanlike English. Apart from the writings of men of genius in expression, there has always been a great amount of bad writing.

A typical example is found in the writings of our foremost Chief Justice, John Marshall. Shortly after the death of Washington, Marshall wrote a semi-official life of him. It's a huge affair, one of the dullest books ever written. It has all the faults of which Mr. Lloyd complains as though this age had newly invented them, and is full of writing that is "muddy, backward, convoluted and self-strangled."

Later, as Chief Justice, Marshall achieved a style which is lucid, energetic and highly persuasive. He achieved this mastery of expression by taking pains, as many of the abler nonprofessional writers can if they make a sustained effort to write clearly and well.

To go further than this and expect that disregard of the rules for writing correct English will enable such writers to give us a style that is, in Mr. Lloyd's words, "brisk, casual, colorful, amused, ironic and entertaining" is to demand more than human nature can furnish. There is much too much dullness and mediocrity in the world for this to come to pass.

BENJAMIN H. KIZER
Spokane, Washington

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1953

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